

**Title:**

“You don’t really have friends, you have acquaintances.” Exploring the experience of friendship for ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

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December 2011

## **Abstract**

As globalisation increases more families than ever are relocating from their passport countries for periods of temporary employment overseas. This has resulted in an increasing number of young people being raised in overseas locations. These young people are collectively referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCK) their adult counterparts are Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs). They are different from immigrants, as they do not expect to permanently settle in the location in which they have been residing. This lack of permanence has been criticised for engendering a variety of difficulties that TCKs and ATCKs must face. Of interest to this study was the observation that TCKs experience various difficulties with their friend relationships. This is problematic, as friendship has been found to be crucial to indicators of well-being such as happiness, and longevity.

An interpretative phenomenological analysis of Adult Third Culture Kids' experiences of friendship was undertaken. Eight ATCKs from the UK, three men and five women, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. Analysis revealed that participants' experience of friendship was situated in various themes. These included: the challenges of friendship; multiple identities in response to friendship; the psychological impact of friendship; and valued characteristics of friendship. Each theme was comprised of various subordinate themes that facilitated further understanding of the super ordinate theme.

The findings were discussed with reference to the TCK literature and a wider review of psychological theory. Particular attention was given to the discussion of attachment theory, as this underscored several of the findings related to the Superordinate theme, the psychological impact of friendship; particularly the finding that ATCKs experience anxiety in friendships, report negative views of self and others and reveal a lack of strong attachments to their peers. In addition identity theory was also utilised in the discussion as the findings indicated a high salience of identity issues for ATCKs in relation to their friendship experiences, reflected in the theme, multiple identities in response to friendship.

The implications for clinical practice were considered. These included suggestions for working with ATCKs who present with difficulties in their friend relationships, by exploring their history of loss, their anxiety about friend relationships and the meaning attached to becoming involved in peer relationships. Suggestions were also made for therapists to explore the ATCKs sense of self in terms of negative thoughts about self and other, including being 'English/British' or forming relationships with 'English/British' peers.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to Professor Rachel Tribe for her support throughout this research project. I am so grateful for her faith in my abilities to be a ‘good enough’ scientist–practitioner.

Thank you also to David Kaposi who provided emergency support and much needed humour in the final stages of writing.

Thank you to the eight ATCKs who participated in this project and allowed me to interpret their stories. Without sharing their experiences with me I would not have been able to give voice to a ‘British’ contingent of ATCKs.

Thanks also to the friendships I have made, lost and held onto dearly throughout my own life transitions. I have been fortunate in my experiences as a TCK, because of the friends I have encountered. In particular, the ones I have kept since Primary school- my ‘Golden Girls’. The idea for this thesis came partly from discussions I have had with the ATCKs whose loyalty and commitment is my greatest source of support. Thank you to Eliza for being so enthusiastic way back when we thought we came up with the term third culture! And to Heidi who’s thoughtfulness encouraged me to pursue this line of inquiry.

Thank you to Rita and Mellissa who proof read drafts of my thesis. Having learned in 3 different school systems, I never could get my head around ‘correct’ spelling and grammar- that’s my story and I’m sticking with it...

Thank you to my Mom and Dad for raising a good TCK by encouraging me to be curious about the world and compassionate towards the people in it.

Finally, thank you to the TCKs far and wide who inspired me to take up this research project. Especially those who struggle to feel connected with others. I hope they will benefit from this work in some way.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my best friend, Charlie, for your patience, your supportiveness and your unyielding faith in my ability. I am so grateful that I met another ATCK who could keep up with me, (re)create a shared history and accept my interminable independence with an open mind. I hope with this part of our story written we can now enjoy the journey together.



## **List of abbreviations used**

<b>ATCK:</b>	Adult Third Culture Kid
<b>ATCKs:</b>	Plural of ATCK
<b>TCK:</b>	Third Culture Kid
<b>TCKs:</b>	Plural of TCK
<b>non-TCK:</b>	Non-Third Culture Kid
<b>IPA:</b>	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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## 1.0 Introduction.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This first chapter gives a general introduction to the current study and should orientate the reader to the overall research, including the research questions, the epistemology, method and the main findings. Chapter two is a discussion of the literature relevant to informing the current study. Friendship and identity theories relevant to psychology are introduced and critiqued. The phenomenon of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) is also described in chapter two, before citing and critiquing the TCK literature that informed the current study. Chapter three describes the epistemological position and method utilised by this researcher to arrive at the findings and chapter four the procedure I followed to obtain the data for this study. Chapter five reports the main findings from my data analysis. Finally, chapter six considers my findings in light of the available literature and offers a conclusion. A reflective journal was kept throughout the process of conducting this study. An example of this can be found in Appendix 14, or in full on the CD.

In today's global climate, increasing numbers of people are making the transition to overseas living. While it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of people living abroad, some figures suggest that over half a million Britons were living abroad in 2006 for reasons related to temporary employment (Finch, Andrew and Latorre, 2010). Data from the Office for National Statistics (2011) suggests that the number of people working abroad was on the increase until recently. Between 1999 and 2008 there was a steady outflow of UK residents leaving for overseas opportunities (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The length of time abroad varied from one to more than four years overseas, with estimates that this is increasing steadily. In 2008, records indicated the highest number of people leaving the UK for twelve months or more (Office for National Statistics, 2010). This has recently slowed, but the implications for families are still considerable. It is not uncommon for business people such as diplomats, missionaries and the military to take their families abroad, creating what has become a sub-culture known as the Third Culture Kids (TCKs). If we add the UK statistics to census data from other countries, it could be argued that there is a significant number of TCKs residing overseas who will eventually return 'home' (Hervey, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Stringham, 1993).

*A Third Culture Kid is '...a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The Third Culture Kid builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the Third Culture Kid's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar*

*background.* ' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p 19). Research has indicated TCKs experience a variety of challenges with their friend relationships. For example, some researchers have suggested that when a TCK returns to their passport country they may feel a sense of neglect (Cottrell and Useem, 1993b; Minami, 1993; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Useem, 1993) or social isolation because they do not belong to a particular social group (Downie, 1976; Gerner, Perry, Moselle, and Archbold, 1992). Some studies report that TCK experience feelings of insecurity within their interpersonal relationships (Killham, 1990; Werkman, Farley, Butler and Quayhagen, 1981). Other studies are largely quantitative, taking the form of large surveys (Cottrell and Useem, 1993) or remain anecdotal without grounding in a rigorous methodology as would be done in a qualitative study (e.g. Pollock and Van Reken, 2001).

Few studies have begun with questions about friendship itself, beginning with questions of identity instead. This renders observations about friendship fragmented and thus lacking robust discussion, which in turn leaves the reader wanting to know more and unsure where to find it or how much influence to give it. A richer discussion of friendship would highlight the importance of friendship for well-being and reveal the challenges, motivations and rewards that TCKs experience when navigating peer relationships. In addition to a lack of robust discussion of friendship itself, the majority of studies which make claims about friendship are American-centric; few have addressed a British population. By studying a British cohort of ATCKs particularities to this population may be found.

Research has suggested that individuals who experience difficulty forming and maintaining good relationships with others are likely to experience unfulfilled social needs, manifesting in difficulties such as loneliness, depression, anxiety and anger (Cacioppo, Ernst, Burleson, McClintock, Malarkey, Hawkley, Kowalewski, Paulsen, Hobson, Hugdahl, Spiegel and Berntson, 2000; Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, and Early, 1996; Heinrich and Gullone, 2006). Additionally, research has described the necessity of friendship in managing transition experiences (Bochner, McLeod and Lin, 1977; Harari, Jones and Sek, 1988; Goodman, Schlossberg and Anderson, 2006). The maintenance of friendship may be particularly relevant for TCKs and ATCKs, as they make frequent geographical transitions, which can result in culture shock; the experience of psychological distress associated with migrating to an overseas location (Oberg, 1960; Taft, 1977) and reverse culture shock; the experience of psychological distress associated with re-entry to ones own passport country, (Uehara, 1986). Further discussion of these phenomena can be found in the literature review in section 2.5.3 on page 19.

The aim of this project is to articulate the friendship experiences of Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) from the UK, within a phenomenological framework. An ATCK refers to an adult Third Culture Kid (TCK). The current research has its foundations in social psychology and more specifically interpersonal relationships from a symbolic interactionist perspective. This perspective acknowledges the role of identity in relationships, and relationships as having a role in identity. As such both friendship research and identity theories were considered important to informing the research questions. This was done without making assumptions about what may be relevant for ATCKs, as the method adopted suggests the researcher must 'bracket' their existing knowledge about a phenomenon in order to do it justice. This involves putting aside ones existing knowledge of a phenomena to allow new information and ideas to emerge.

To answer the research question: what is the experience of friendship like for ATCKs from the UK? Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was thought to be useful. IPA aims to explore and understand how individuals make sense of their world and what various experiences, events and states mean for participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA holds its theoretical roots in phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenological psychology emphasises the importance of a person's perception of the world and does not attempt to produce objective accounts (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); it is not concerned with an objective 'truth'. Symbolic interactionism recognises that individuals ascribe meanings to events but that these meanings occur in interactions; in this way IPA takes a 'light social constructionist' position (Eatough and Smith, 2006, p. 485). This is further unpacked in chapter 3, section 3.2, on page 35.

In addition meanings can only be accessed through a process of interpretation by the researcher. As such it is important to acknowledge the researchers own preconceived values, ideas and beliefs, which may influence the interpretation (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). However, IPA engages in the double hermetic whereby the researchers own experiences and interpretations of the participants are made use of. Further discussion and unpacking of these concepts can be found throughout chapter 3.

The data analysis from this study revealed that ATCKs experience a number of challenges, such as anxiety in friend relationships and rewards, such as finding supportive and open-minded friends. These experiences have an impact on the individual with a variety of consequences for the ATCKs' sense of self. For example, ATCKs report multiple identities in response to friend relationships, which has an impact on their experience of the friendship itself. I introduce these issues more thoroughly in chapter 5, page 47.



It is intended that the organisation of this work as well as the findings from the study conducted will be of interest to counselling psychologists and others who work with TCKs and ATCKs. More specifically, I argue that this work will be of use to clinicians who work with TCKs and ATCKs presenting with difficulties with their interpersonal relationships. Issues such as anxiety, for example, can be linked with a history of loss of friend relationships in the TCKs lives. Ultimately clinicians will be in a stronger position to help define therapeutic goals and facilitate process through greater awareness of issues relevant to the TCKs and ATCKs. I will make this argument more thoroughly in my discussion in chapter 6.

## **2.0 Literature review**

### **2.1 Overview**

Friendship research has developed from philosophical debate to grounding in empirical evidence, to an interdisciplinary theory (Perlman and Duck, 2006). Current friendship research recognises the importance of the social and cultural contexts in which friendships occur as well as the analyses of cognitive processes and communication strategies used in friendship (Perlman and Duck, 2006). This review is concerned with a commentary on the literature on friendship and, more specifically, the growing body of research dedicated to understanding the ‘Third Culture Kid’ (TCK) and the ‘Adult Third Culture Kid’ (ATCK) phenomena. I will begin by describing the importance of friendship in modern society (section 2.2) before outlining some specific theoretical perspectives on the study of friendship and its definition within psychology (section 2.3). I will also consider the relationship between friendship and identity (section 2.4). My review will then provide an introduction to the Third Culture Kid phenomena (section 2.5), before describing and critiquing the TCK literature on friendship and identity. This chapter concludes with a rationale for the current research and a statement of the research questions (section 2.6).

### **2.2 The importance of friendship for health in a global world**

Research indicates that close social relationships are the first choice for most people for dealing with personal problems and that seeking help from psychological services is a less desirable alternative (Cameron, Leventhal, and Leventhal, 1993). It has been suggested that rather than this being a problem with counselling services there is something more reassuring about confiding in a friendship (Parham and Tinsley, 1980). A research review of university counselling services across several countries, including South Africa, America, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom, suggested that a limited number of students access such services. International students, in particular, underutilize the services provided. This is argued to be because students prefer seeking help from friends (and/or family) more than from professional sources (Raunic and Xenos, 2008). What though, if there is a paucity of friendship in a person’s life?

‘Human beings are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong’ (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p. 522). Those who have difficulty forming and maintaining good relationships with others are likely to experience unfulfilled social needs, manifesting in difficulties such as loneliness, depression, anxiety and anger (Cacioppo, et al, 2000; Hagerty, et al, 1996; Heinrich and Gullone,

2006). There is evidence that friendships are crucial to a variety of indicators of well-being, such as, happiness, psychological and physical health and longevity (Berkman, Glass, Brissette and Seeman, 2000). In addition, researchers in the 1970's suggested that individuals with strong social relationships are protected from the potential pathogenic effects of stressful events, such as depression (Cobb, 1976). Friendship, then, is vital for the health and well-being of individuals (Heinrich and Gullone, 2006).

In addition evidence suggests that overseas transitions can result in culture shock; the experience of psychological distress associated with migrating to an overseas location (Oberg, 1960; Taft, 1977) and reverse culture shock; the experience of psychological distress associated with re-entry to ones own passport country, (Uehara, 1986; Firestone, 1992). Research has described the necessity of friendship in managing these experiences (Bochner, et al, 1977; Harari, et al, 1988; Goodman, et al, 2006). Research has also suggested that forming and maintaining friendships is problematic for people making frequent transitions overseas (Werkman, Farley, Butler and Quayhagen, 1981). This is of particular importance in understanding the TCK phenomena. I will return to these issues in further detail when I introduce TCKs in section 2.5.3. To gain an understanding of friendship it is necessary to consider how psychology has sought to understand this concept.

### **2.3 The study of friendship**

The purpose of this section is to introduce an overview of the major theoretical perspectives of the study of friendship and to provide grounding in the psychological literature on the study of friendship thereby providing a framework for understanding how the current research was informed.

#### **2.3.1 The definition of friendship within psychology**

If you ask a group of people what friendship is you would 'receive almost as many answers as there were people in the group' (Blieszner and Adams, 1992, p. 1). In western psychology, friendship is essentially a non-institutionalised relationship (Blieszner and Adams, 1992). Friendship is not defined by what the participants do together. It may be that the participants in a friendship share the same activities, but it does not matter what those activities are (Hinde, 1997). Kin relationships are also not defined by shared activities, but the individuals sharing kinship have no choice as to whom they are related to, while choice is an essential feature of friendship (Hinde, 1997).

It has been noted that friendships are more than isolated interactive moments, and scripted role-relations—they have a holistic quality (Vangelisti and Perlman, 2006). As such, they can develop over time and may be experienced differently at different times and under various circumstances (Duck, 1990). For this reason, friendship has been a difficult concept to measure objectively and thus meanings associated with the concept of friendship are subjective (Hinde, 1997). However, research indicates that friends are individuals outside the family, who are liked and whose company is enjoyed (Argyle, 1998). Typically, friendship is voluntary, (Blieszner and Adams, 1992), and includes the notion of a reciprocity and mutual benefit, liking and enjoyment (Bukowski, Newcombe and Hartup, 1996). When friends come together it is through choice, they enjoy each other's company and the activities they share (Hinde, 1997). In addition friendship shares the essential element of talking (Hinde, 1997). Friendship depends on a shared body of knowledge, which makes it possible for the members of the dyad to understand one another. Friendship is also categorized by a number of features such as self-disclosure, trust, interpersonal perception, and commitment, which may be present to varying degrees and in different proportions in different friendship relationships. 'Friendship implies more than mere acquaintance but need not necessarily imply great intimacy' (Hinde, 1997, p. 410).

Finally, friendship can also provide confirmation of self-value, beliefs and identity (Meill and Dallos, 1996). It thus creates and sustains a mutual reality in which the identity of each member of the friendship relationship confirms that of the other. According to symbolic interactionism the self arises out of human interaction (Mead and Morris, 1934), a concept I will expand on as I discuss the various theories of how friendships are established and maintained. The conventional wisdom is that we choose friends because of who they are. However, research suggests that we are motivated to form friendships because of the way they support who we are (Montoya, Horton and Kirchner, 2008). This concept brings us to the measurement of friendship.

### **2.3.2 The measurement of friendship**

Studies of relationships have typically utilised one of four paradigms. Here, I present an overview of each of these four paradigms while expanding on the two that inform the hermeneutic circle for the current research.

Evolutionary approaches to personal relationships seek to understand relationships as essential for survival and usually make use of biological data thus taking a realist paradigm. These theories have been criticised for producing controversial perspectives (Harvey and Wenzel, 2006) and the social

constructivist perspective would argue that people develop their relationships through their thoughts, feelings and interactions (Bem, 1993, cited by Harvey and Wenzel, 2006). This critique may lead one to the cognitive behavioural approach to friendship. This approach informed the present study.

Cognitive behavioural approaches consider the way we perceive and interpret relationships to have a profound effect on our emotions and behaviour (cf. Beck, 1988). Cognitive processes reflect the internal thoughts that each member of the friendship has about themselves, the friend and the friendship. Affective processes reflect the emotional relations to friends and the friendship, which can vary in frequency and strength depending on the relationship. Behavioural processes are the actions that are taken in a friend relationship, such as communication, displays of affection and social support for example. These three types of friendship processes interact with one another such that they inform one another.

An important aspect of how we perceive friend relationships is considered within the similarity theory of friendship. This theory focuses on the way people select friends and assesses how they perceive that potential friends will meet their needs. These theories emphasise the role friendships play in confirming and validating one's competence, opinions and identity. The main finding of similarity theory is that people select friends who are similar to them as a means to achieve assurance of their own efficacy. For example, Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory suggested that people use others to confirm their own worldview, thus achieving validation. The more similar two persons' attitudes are the more they are likely to like one another (Byrne, 1971; Montoya, et al, 2008).

In selecting similar friends, people are provided with a framework of how they ought to behave and what they should be capable of. The ultimate goal of friendship is to achieve identity support through establishing similarity (Duck, 1973). Old friends have been found to be essential in supporting self and identity in a changing world. Long-term friendships achieve this through shared experience and mutual contribution to the various interpretations of past and present life events (Hartup and Stevens, 1997). A number of studies support similarities at a various levels. For example, people are more likely to choose partners with a similar attachment style (Frazier, Byer, Fischer, Wright and DeBord, 1996), although evidence for the opposite of this can also be found (Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994). Despite this, similarity between friends is evident at all ages in gender, ethnicity and sociometric status (Hartup, 2006) and 83% of a sample indicated perceived

similarity as accounting for their friendship (Blieszner, 1995). Thus identity forms an important aspect of friendship and vice versa, and will be given further attention in section 2.4.

Much of the empirical evidence to support cognitive-behavioural approaches focuses on attributions that individuals make for events that occur in their relationships (cf. Bradbury and Fincham, 1990). Taken together these attributions form a category called ‘causal attributions’ which focus on who or what caused a condition or event to occur. Typically studies utilize self-report measures and observations (Charania and Ickes, 2006). These studies have been criticised for their heavy emphasis on the cognitive over the behavioural element in relating (Harvey and Wenzel, 2006). In addition researchers call for these theories to expand their parameters and include other ways of including the cognitive component (Harvey and Wenzel, 2006). For example, attachment theory provides a basis for considering how attachment models influence the way we perceive events in adult relationships (cf. Baldwin, Keelan, Fehr, Enns and Koh-Rangarajoo, 1996).

### **2.3.3 Friendship and attachment.**

Bowlby’s theory of attachment (1969, 1988) emphasised the importance of empathy and emotional sensitivity in the development of secure attachments. Within this model a key attachment figure provides a ‘secure base’ from which an infant can explore the world and later return to for reassurance and ‘security’. Generally it is thought that these early experiences are the main contributor to the development of an internal working model about the dependability and trustworthiness of others and the worthiness of oneself to be included in a relationship (Harvey and Wenzel, 2006). Originally this research addressed the parent-child relationship, but research has developed the notion of attachment as a feature of adult relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Rholes, and Simpson, 2004). That is, the functions of attachment bonds identified in infant-caregiver studies are also apparent in adults’ committed close relationships (Ainsworth, 1989). Thus adults desire to be with relationship partners (proximity seeking), seek comfort from them in times of stress (safe haven), become distressed when they are unavailable (separation protest), and derive a sense of security and confidence from their relationships (secure base). More recently these functions have been identified in friend relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Welch and Houser, 2010; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary and Brumbaugh, 2011).

Most research makes the assumption that working models of self and others are relatively general and trait-like. These working models play an important role in the way people interpret and

understand their social worlds. Attachment models have been found to account for a broad range of individual differences in cognition, emotion and behaviour in relationships (Simpson and Rholes, 1998). Recent research suggests that people can develop attachment styles that are more relationship-specific, thus the context of the relationship is an important determinant of attachment behaviour and leads people to hold distinct working models in different relationships (Fraley, et al, 2011). As children gradually separate from their caregivers in adolescence peers take on significant attachment relationships and in the absence of a significant life partner are often the most important attachment figure in adulthood (Lieberman, Doyle & Markiewicz, 1999). Life circumstances have also been shown to have an influence on attachment style and behaviour (Bar-Haim, Sutton, Fox and Marvin, 2000). Bar-Haim et al (2000) found evidence that the Mothers of children who did not exhibit stability of attachment reported more negative and less positive life events, supporting the argument that attachment styles are not stable over time. This is a significant finding when we consider the high mobility of TCKs families and the stress of culture shock for families in transition (see section 2.5.3 for discussion of culture shock).

Attachment is typically measured along dimensions of attachment anxiety and intimacy avoidance, with individuals who are anxious about attachment displaying a negative view of self and those who avoid intimacy displaying a negative view of others. Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) model of adult attachment utilised views of self or others as described in table 5:

**Table 1:** Table of a matrix of adult attachment styles

Attachment style	Secure	Preoccupied	Dismissive	Fearful
View of self	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
View of other	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative

Adapted from Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991).

Preoccupied, dismissive and fearful attachment styles are all seen as insecure patterns of attachment, each with a different presentation in friend relationships (Welch and Houser, 2010). For example, fearful and dismissing attachment styles both demonstrate difficulties in becoming close to and relying on others. For both the fearful and the dismissing individual the 'person's avoidance of intimacy pre-empts the possibility of establishing close relationships that might otherwise update working models of other people' (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991, p. 240). This can lead to loneliness or the denial of feelings.

#### **2.3.4 Social exchange and equity theory of friendship.**

A final major paradigm in the study of friendship is social exchange and equity theory. This is the view that people operate to gain rewards and avoid punishments (Canary and Stafford, 2001). An equitable relationship is one in which the ratios of friendship outcomes divided by inputs are equal for both parties (Canary and Stafford, 2001). People who perceive their friend relationships to be inequitable may engage in strategies to restore the balance (Canary and Stafford, 2001). To the individual making the assessment, the most satisfying relationships are equitable, followed by 'over-benefitted'; where the perceiver gains more than is given, followed by 'under-benefitted'; where the perceiver gives more than receives (Hatfield, Utne, and Traupmann, 1979). Equity rules do not always appear to dominate the exchange process and communal love theory was developed to facilitate an understanding of relationships that do not follow equity rules (Mills and Clark, 1982, cited by Harvey and Wenzel, 2006. p. 39). However, these theories are garnered from relationships such as the parent-child relationship or studies of close romantic relationships, and as such, have a different focus to this study. Instead this study is informed by the cognitive behavioural and attachment paradigms in friendship research. Both these paradigms reflect the importance of the interactional in forming friendships as well as views of self and others. It is to the concept of identity that I now turn my discussion.

#### **2.4 The concept of 'self'.**

*'As a very basic starting point identity is the human capacity - rooted in language - to know 'who's who' (and hence 'what's what') (Jenkins, 2008, p. 5).*

Early psychologists such as Freud (1926) viewed the self as personal and private, something wholly individual. His central tenet was that identity was not stable or rational, but an ever-conflicted tension between the id and ego, conscious and subconscious mind. Freud's work was expanded by researchers, such as Erikson (1980), whose concept of self is based on the notion that the self is constantly changing due to social interactions. This early work formed the basis on which social psychologists debate whether the self is something individual or collective.

A collective self is the view that the self draws its properties from groups. Early theorists such as Sherif (1936) and Asch (1952) articulated how norms would arise from interactions with others that are internalised and form a basis for a self-identity. The individual self is achieved through self-definition of personal characteristics and independent of group membership. Support for the



individual-self hypothesis is 'derived mostly from research on (a) self stability, (b) self-enhancement, and (c) the individual as the unit of natural selection' (Gaertner, Sedikides and Graetz, 1999, p. 5). The research on individual and collective self, considered groups to be formed of individuals interacting with each other rather than individuals with a collective sense of shared identity and so advocates of the individual self tended to prevail in the literature until the elaboration of social identity theory (Abrams and Hogg, 2001).

The central tenant of social identity theory is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions, the social and the personal. The social dimension concerns the individual's membership in various social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), whereas the personal concerns the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others (Abrams and Hogg, 2001). Social and personal identities are thought to lie at opposite ends of the identity continuum, becoming more or less salient depending on the context. Verkuyten (1997) critiqued social identity theory by showing that people do not always use fixed categories to define themselves. However, some psychologists argue that the two dimensions cannot be separated and argue that there is interplay between the two (Deaux, 1993). Other psychologists argue that there are more differences in emphasis than in kind and that linking the two theories can help establish a more fully integrated view of the self (Stets and Burke, 2000).

The idea that we have a variety of selves and that contextual factors can engender different selves has a variety of ramifications. Social constructionists have argued that the self is completely situation dependent. Taken to its extreme, this position argues that we construct multiple selves through talk (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). A less extreme position suggests that situational factors influence the self, but that cognitive representations of the self are present in people as organising principles for perception, categorisation and action (Abrams and Hogg, 2001). It is at this symbolic interactionist level that friendship and identity become interlinked. 'Interaction between friends creates and sustains a mutual reality in which each partner's identity confirms that of the other' (Hinde, 1997, p. 410).

Symbolic interactionism is the theory that the self emerges from human interaction through the trading of consensual symbols in language and gesture that represent abstract properties rather than concrete objectives (Mead and Morris, 1934). From this perspective the self cannot be thought to 'reside' within an individual but rather is the resulting construct that emerges through interactions 'between' people. This view challenges contemporary western views of the self, as something of a unitary core that exists throughout each individual's life (Spinelli, 2005). The majority of

researchers argue that self is not a single undifferentiated identity, but a repertoire of varied identities rooted in our various social relationships (Gergen, 1971). Essentially, the self is not just constructed in social context, but also has the capacity for self-reflection. In this way identity is not fixed but ‘constantly changing and alive’ (Letourneau, 2001. p2), it is both individual and social. This approach leads us to acknowledge the power of the interpretational element in determining our self-concept (Spinelli, 2005) and aligns more closely with the phenomenological view approach adopted in this study.

The phenomenological self is one that is temporary, interpretational and contextual. We thus have as many social identities as there are groups that we feel we belong to and as many personal identities as there are interpersonal relationships in which we are involved (Turner, 1982). This suggests that knowing ‘who’s who’ and ‘what’s what’ (Jenkins, 2008) or vice versa has implications for our self-concept. What if parts of our identity are being denied or are considerably ‘different’ from our immediate social group? What if our context is unstable and transient? How do we cope when we lack information about who’s who, and what’s what? This will be discussed with regard to the Third Culture Kid phenomena, where the interplay of friendship and identity is approached as a crucial element in furthering our understanding of this group.

## **2.5 Third Culture Kids**

The phenomena of Third Culture Kids can be traced as far back as the first traders and missionaries on early overseas assignments that gave birth to the expatriate family and, ultimately, the TCK. Only in the past fifty years have the numbers of TCKs emerged as a phenomenon of appreciable size to become of interest to researchers with both large scale and smaller sample studies being conducted (Cottrell and Useem, 1994).

In today’s global climate, increasing numbers of people are making the transition to overseas living. While it is difficult to ascertain the number of people living abroad, it is evident that the number of people working abroad was on the increase until recently (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Data from the Office for National Statistics between 1999 and 2008 reports a steady outflow of UK residents leaving for overseas opportunities. The length of time abroad varies from one to more than four years overseas, with estimates that this is increasing steadily. 2008 records indicated the highest number of people leaving the UK for twelve months or more (Office for National Statistics, 2010). This has recently slowed, but the implications for families are considerable. It is not

uncommon for business people such as diplomats, missionaries and the military to take their families abroad, creating what has become a sub-culture known as the TCK. If we add the UK statistics to census data from other countries, it could be argued that there is a significant number of children residing overseas who will eventually return 'home' (Hervey, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Stringham, 1993).

A variety of empirical data has emerged within the past thirty years documenting the TCK experience, with a number of specific topics emerging. The subjects of reverse culture shock (the shock of returning to the passport country) identity and friendship have been considered to varying degrees in the available literature. However, it is important to note that while the TCK literature is beginning to consider an international sample, the majority of the work, to date, has focused on American samples. The participants in the current research were all UK citizens, but in outlining my argument I will draw from the existing material.

The term 'third culture' was first used by researchers to summarise their observations of cross-cultural encounters in India (Useem, Donoghue and Useem, 1963). The authors' central tenet was that one culture residing in another culture eventually becomes part of a 'third culture'. This 'third culture' is regarded as more than the merger of the original and host cultures. Rather, it refers to the lifestyles created, shared and learned by people in the process of *relating* to their societies, and thus becomes a distinct group.

After returning to the USA, Useem extended her work to include young American adults who had returned from overseas to attend university in the USA. Useem coined the term 'Third Culture Kid' to refer to the children who had accompanied their parents to live in another cultural society and then returned to their country of origin. She suggested that for all the differences of background, nationality, ethnicity, and purpose for living internationally, there were some fundamentals they all shared such as cross-cultural lifestyle, high mobility and expected repatriation (Useem and Downie, 1976).

### **2.5.1 Definitions of Third Culture Kids**

The term 'third culture' requires that the reader consider a broad application of the word 'culture'. This 'culture' is not only grounded in a geographic location but encompasses a variety of other considerations, a lifestyle that is 'created, shared and learned' (Useem, 1993, p.1). Traditional practices and symbols of cultural heritage are not useful as these vary between groups of TCKs but

certain fundamentals, such as transience, change and mobility are consistent. Zorica (2012) provides a humorous view of this 'shared' culture that resonates with the majority of TCKs as it is often passed around TCK websites and online communities of TCKs (Appendix 17).

The term, Third Culture Kid (TCK), has evolved as a new way to distinguish and describe the children of expatriates (Useem, 1993; Useem and Downie, 1976). In addition, the term 'Adult Third Culture Kid' (ATCK) has come to identify the adults who TCKs become. Although Useem focused on American TCKs, research has found the same features in young adults of other nationalities (Cameron, 2003; Selmer and Lam, 2004; Willis, Enloe and Minoura, 1994); the common thread being the shared experience of being internationally mobile during childhood (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001).

McCaig (1994) coined the term 'Global Nomad' which is used interchangeably with TCK (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti, 1993). However, the evolution of this definition includes children who have gone abroad following armed conflict or children who have entered another culture without leaving their own country (as occurs with children living on Native American Reservations while their parents work there), as well as children who have a bicultural heritage, but remain in one country their entire lives. As such the definition risks being diluted beyond use for researchers and TCKs themselves. McCaig (2001) argues that if researchers are to share data without risk of contamination they must be clear about whom it is they have been researching. This can only be assured if 'we maintain the integrity and continuity of past terminology' (McCaig, 2001, p. xvi). Thus a TCK or global nomad refers to:

*'Individuals of any age or nationality who have spent a significant part of their developmental years living in one or more countries outside their passport country because of their parents' occupation' (Schaetti, 1993, p. 13).*

There are several key themes within this definition that are addressed in the literature (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti, 1998).

*Age:* Once a TCK, always a TCK. The developmental experiences of being a TCK continue to exert an influence even if the TCK settles in one place as an adult and remains settled (Fail, 1995; Cottrell and Useem, 1994).

*Nationality:* While the majority of TCK research addressees an American population, TCKs are of all nationalities with an emerging body of research to address TCK populations from countries such as Australia, Japan and the UK (Cameron, 2003; Selmer and Lam, 2004; Willis, et al, 1994; Fail, et al., 2004).

*Significant:* While there is some exploration of a correlation between the length of time spent abroad and the influence of that experience on the TCKs identity (Downie, 1976; Eriksen, 1999). The argument does not discount the effects of relatively short experiences overseas. Thus ‘significance’ is subjective and left to the individual to determine.

*Developmental years:* The TCK literature consistently adheres to the standard set in the psychological literature as defining developmental years as the period spanning birth to adolescence (Thornton, 2008). This suggests that international mobility is experienced while a person’s fundamental self is developing (cf. Erickson, 1980; Schaetti, 2000). However, TCKs are often presented with inconsistent worldviews, and thus are confronted with the extra task of sorting through a variety of meaning systems, which they may utilize to define their sense of self. Consequently, many TCKs are thought to experience a period of ‘delayed adolescence’ (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 150). During this time the TCK may seem to have “no real convictions about much of anything” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 93). The concept of ‘emerging adulthood’ Phinney (2008, p. 48) was proposed to suggest that a multicultural childhood can extend the time individuals spend exploring their sense of self to well into and even beyond their twenties. For TCKs there is the additional sense that one’s home is everywhere and nowhere or rootlessness, and the migratory instinct or restlessness stemming from early nomadic experiences (Fail et al., 2004; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). During adolescence ‘the young individual must learn to be most himself [sic – universal male] where he means most to others – those others, to be sure, who have come to mean most to him’ (Erikson, 1959, p. 102). TCKs may find this learning process challenging because the people who ‘mean most’ to them are scattered around the world. The TCKs introduction to various cultures and their highly mobile lifestyle creates challenges for TCKs in establishing a sense of self. This can be unpacked using a phenomenological approach to identity, where their sense of self is not a ‘core’ self but an ever evolving and reflective process. This is further unpacked in section 2.5.5.

*One or more countries:* Some TCKs move numerous times while others spend their entire time overseas in one location. The literature claims that even those who live in only one overseas country

during their developmental years experience a sense of mobility as they and their families, as well as others around them, come and go (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Useem and Downie, 1976).

*Passport country:* This term highlights a crucial theme for TCKs, that the parents' country of origin, the 'home' country, may be no more to the TCK than the passport with which they travel (Bell, 1996; Cottrell and Useem, 1993; Downie, 1976; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Knowledge of 'home' is indirect, mediated by parental memories, periodic family holidays, media, and other expatriates. Thus while nationality is important to a TCK, it serves more as a cultural veneer, than a foundation as it may for the parents (McCaig, 1994).

*Parental occupation:* While TCKs share some commonalities with immigrants and refugees, mobility based on parental employment is particular to the TCK experience (Cottrell and Useem, 1993; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). TCKs are not considered to be the same as immigrants or refugees as they do not expect to permanently settle in the country to which they relocate (Useem and Downie, 1976; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). In addition they are expected to 'fit in' when the (re)enter their 'home' country unlike the immigrant or refugee, who is afforded the status of 'foreigner' even though the TCK may feel like a 'foreigner' in their passport country (Killguss, 2008). Research has also indicated a direct influence of the sponsoring organisation on the TCK experience (Peterson and Plamondon, 2009). The TCK may adopt certain institutionalized codes of practice in line with the parents company that sponsors the overseas employment in order to help maintain the parent's employment (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). The parents' occupation most typically falls into one of the following categories: international business, diplomatic service, military service, missionary service, international NGO, international education of private business (Downie, 1976).

The dynamics of the individual expatriate family, along with the degree of intercultural competence and understanding the parents and guardian have, influences the TCK experience (Sussman, 1986). The family is a crucial socialising agent with the potential to play a significant role in teaching the TCK to successfully navigate their internationally mobile years (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti and Ramsey, 1999a). However, friendships are also an important influence in making successful transitions as will be discussed in section, 2.5.3.

*'To have a meaningful discussion about TCKs it is essential to remember that it is the **interplay** of the factors- living in both culturally changing **and** highly mobile worlds during the **formative** years*

*rather than any single factor alone that leads to the evolution of both the benefits and the challenges [of being a TCK]’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 39-40)*

Revision of the term Third Culture Kid now refers to:

*‘...a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The Third Culture Kid builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the Third Culture Kid’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p 19).*

It was this particular quote that highlighted and propelled my interest in TCK research. I began to question that if a sense of ‘belonging is in relationship to others’ who are the others and how are we affected by them or their absence? In order to discuss this in depth I believed it was important to heed McCaig’s advice not to dilute the TCK term beyond recognition. For that reason the current research selected a population for study using characteristics identified by Useem and thus avoiding confusing the data with variables such as refugee status. This is discussed in greater detail in the method section, under participants (see page 28).

As discussed, there are several key themes involved in being a TCK. While the TCK experience is not entirely unique, sharing some commonalities with international students and other sojourners, it is not entirely typical either, when compared with those who spend all their developmental years in their home country. Perhaps the most unique characteristic is that the TCK grows up in a truly cross-cultural world. That is, they live in, rather than simply observe different cultural worlds. Their worlds are also highly mobile. That is, not only is the TCK mobile, but others in their surroundings are also in flux (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Change is really the only constant in the TCK lifestyle.

### **2.5.2 Third Culture Kids: Benefits and Challenges**

To deal with the constant changes TCKs learn to be more adaptable and flexible than their non-TCK peers, skills which are traditionally learned much later in life (Fail, 1995; Gerner, et al, 1992; Useem and Cottrell, 1993a.). However, despite the benefits that adaptability and flexibility may bring, the enormous challenge of transacting the developmental years in a state of constant change can take its toll. For example, TCKs score lower in emotional stability than non-TCK peers

(Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009) and high levels of depression and suicide among TCKs have been reported (Cottrell and Useem, 1993b; Devens, 2005). Research has also suggested that forming and maintaining friendships is problematic for people making frequent transitions overseas (Werkman, Farley, Butler and Quayhagen, 1981).

As mentioned, parental roles are important in enabling the TCK to successfully negotiate their internationally mobile experiences (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti and Ramsey, 1999a). Close family bonds are not uncommon and research has addressed the impact family ties have in relation to coping with transition (Selby, Moulding, Clark, Jones, Braunack-Mayer, Beilby, 2009). These authors suggest that support offered by the family during transition is crucial to successful transitions. While parental relationships may be of interest, they are not currently under review. Of greater relevance to the current research are the themes in the TCK literature that have informed the current research, beginning with the evidence that change is constant and can have deleterious effects.

### **2.5.3 Culture shock and reverse culture shock**

The term ‘culture shock’ was originally used by Oberg (1960) to describe the psychological distress associated with migrating to an overseas location. This work was extended by Taft (1977) who conceptualised six distinct aspects of culture shock; the pressure of adapting to the new culture; the experience of loss; confusion in role expectations and self-identity; the experience of being rejected by people in the host culture; and the anxiety and experience of inadequacy associated with being unable to cope in the new environment. These experiences can occur multiple times for the TCK. The results of culture shock for TCKs have been well documented with research highlighting a great deal of loss and unresolved grief (Gerner et al, 1992; Gilbert, 2008; Jordan, 2002; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Werkman et al, 1981). Gilbert (2008) found that TCKs reported several existential losses related to various aspects of themselves, specifically the loss of safety and trust as well as the loss of personal identity.

The experience of reverse culture shock has also been frequently reported in the TCK literature (Bell, 1996; Downie, 1976; Firestone, 1992; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Schulz, 1985). Although TCKs may look the same as the majority of their peers in their passport country, they may not behave the same way or know what is culturally appropriate (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009). As a consequence, TCKs have a higher incidence of adjustment difficulties when compared to non-TCKs (Pedersen and Sullivan, 1964). TCKs have to readjust and reintegrate with the general



cultural milieu of a country from which they have been absent for a number of years, or indeed may never have lived in. The challenges they face in doing this can greatly affect their sense of belonging (Fail, Thompson and Walker, 2004), which may have implications for their experience of friendship and sense of self.

An inventory developed by a group of international students returning to their passport country articulated a number of re-entry difficulties. Social adjustment was reported as the second biggest concern for returning TCKs (Austin, 1986). There was uncertainty about interpersonal relationships and fear of social alienation. There was also dissatisfaction with customary patterns of social interaction and/or frustration with arising from conflicting attitudes. It is not clear if this is the case with TCKs, but it seems worth exploring, as friendship is essential to managing change. An internal support system composed of close relationships with friends and family has an important influence on the ease or difficulty with which transitions are made (Goodman, et al, 2006). Culture shock itself is lower for sojourners with bigger, more varied social networks, particularly when there is at least one close, confiding relationship (Pantelidou and Craig, 2006). What, then is the support system for TCKs like? In attempting to answer this question I will address the TCK literature that considers friendship issues.

#### **2.5.4 Third Culture Kids and friendship**

A few years ago an article appeared in The Daily Beast, an online newspaper, about President Obama's choices for White House staff (Van Reken, 2008). President Obama is himself an ATCK having resided in Indonesia for four years during his childhood. Van Reken noted that many of President Obama's staff were Adult Third Culture Kids, (ATCK). In addition, Van Reken conveyed that President Obama had been judged by his colleagues at the Harvard Law Review to be 'exceptional' at mediating competing arguments, while maintaining a certain 'aloofness' that made his own views hard to discern. Van Reken reported that Obama's colleagues had judged this to mean that he had a 'cool manner' of seeming 'above it all' (Van Reken, 2008, p.1). She also described others viewing TCKs as 'exotic' and 'elitist' and concluded that this was an unfortunate but reoccurring view of TCKs. This seems an accurate synopsis of TCK friendship research, highlighting several key issues. The first that TCKs feel more comfortable with other TCKs, the second, the ease with which TCKs see other world views and articulate them to their peers. Thirdly, that TCKs have difficulty relating to their non-TCK peers and finally, that their non-TCK peers view this as an aloofness. All this has implications for the TCK identity. These issues will be addressed in the following section.

It is difficult to separate the link between friendship and identity if we consider a symbolic interactionist perspective, and some of the literature has taken this position in discussing identity, but not friendship itself (Sears 2011). I will begin with identifying features of friendship in the TCK literature, before moving my discussion to identity and friendship and finally on to the symbolic interactionist approach and a summary of the current research.

The literature on TCKs and friendship comes from a variety of sources, with various conclusions drawn. Much of the evidence that TCKs struggle to be socially adaptable is anecdotal (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) are often quoted in the TCK literature as they produced the seminal text on the TCK phenomena. Their book is widely regarded as sound and research-based, but it is often not clear from where Pollock and Van Reken draw their conclusions. Much of the text combines, anecdote, research and practical advice based on years of working with TCKs. The authors do provide a bibliography at the end of their text, but make numerous claims throughout their work that, unfortunately, they do not reference. Despite this it is possible to find support for their observations in peer-reviewed work. For example, evidence that TCKs struggle to be socially adaptable can be found in peer-reviewed work such as, Downie (1976) or Gerner, et al. (1992). As such this text provides a useful reference for evaluating other TCK research.

Other work, which suggests TCKs struggle with friend relationships, begins with questions about identity (Sears, 2011; Schaetti, 2000; Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009; Willis, et al, 1994). Sears (2011), for example, reported an investigation into the formation and maintenance of identity in TCK children and young people in an international school setting. The findings suggested that TCKs sustain composite identities that encompass their multiple experiences. This work was drawn from the symbolic interactionist approach and usefully examined the formation of identities by young people, but did not explore the experience of friend relationships itself. Despite this some comments made about friend relationships were included, such as TCKs find comfort and confidence by entering a school community where their peers consider their mobile way of life normal and they can integrate their multiple identities. This is a useful finding when other research suggests TCKs struggle to clarify who they are in relation to others when only one part of their identity is being validated (Downie, 1976), discussed further on page, 26.

The majority of TCK research has addressed an American population, but similar findings have been found with British, Japanese and Australasian communities of TCKs (Cameron, 2003; Lam and Selmer, 2004; Willis, et al, 1994). Lam and Selmer (2004), reported findings from a study of

the differences between British adolescents living abroad and those living in the UK. They reported differences that concerned international mobility, flexibility in ways of thinking, respect for others and a national identity, which TCKs considered unimportant, and even a barrier to being international. The British TCKs thought these differences between themselves and their non-TCK peers were factors necessary for leading an internationally mobile lifestyle.

What seems clear from the existing literature is that TCKs encounter a variety of difficulties in their friend relationships. For example, when a TCK returns to their passport country they may feel a sense of neglect (Cotrell and Useem, 1993b; Minami, 1993; Pollock and Ven Reken, 2001; Useem, 1993), or social isolation that they do not belong to a particular social group (Downie, 1976; Gerner, et al, 1992). There is a sense that non-TCKs do not understand or want to share the TCKs' experiences of growing up internationally. The results of this seems split between one group of TCKs dealing with neglect by becoming socially detached because they cannot use their international experiences with the other group disowning their experiences and adopting the passport countries cultural norms (Useem, 1993), this has implications for identity and is discussed further in section 2.5.5.

Within the TCKs literature there seems to be a pervasive feeling of insecurity. Werkman et al, (1981) used a sentence completion questionnaire to study selected attitudinal and personality variables of TCKs compared with a matched-sample of non-TCKs from America. Results indicated, among other things that the TCKs experienced more anxiety in their friend relationships than their non-TCK counterparts. This observation was also made by Killham (1990, cited by Langford, 1998), but appears anecdotal. What seems to be missing from these studies is a clear description of how the insecurity arises, instead there is hypothesising from various sources. Also absent, is a rich description of the experience of friendship itself, instead there are a variety of fragmented observations about friendship experiences made from studies of other phenomena.

In addition to their findings, Werkman et al (1981) reported that TCKs view their greatest strengths as intrapersonal rather than interpersonal. The authors concluded that when TCKs feel less secure in contemplating relationships with others they may cope with the challenge of transition by becoming more inner-directed and less reliant on others, more independent and possibly less able to engage in intimate relationships with others. Other research also supports this hypothesis (Huff, 2001). Huff, (2001) also studied differences between TCKs and non-TCKs using measures of parental attachment, perceived social support, reverse culture shock and college adjustment. A significant difference was found between TCKs and non-TCKs on the 'Parents as Facilitators of Independence'

scale on a parental attachment questionnaire. The authors suggest that while TCK parents facilitate their independence this may mean that TCKs are less able to connect with others. The TCK score on the measure of reverse culture shock also revealed significant differences. The TCKs reported greater cultural and interpersonal distance than non-TCKs, which was attributed to their re-entry experience. The authors concluded that TCKs experience more emotional distance from others than non-TCKs. This study focused on a sample of Missionary Kids (a subgroup of TCKs), which makes it a possibility that other TCK groups might not experience this interpersonal distance. In addition the study was conducted on an American sample and related findings to other work that suggest that American TCKs experience a negative reaction to America cultural values and have difficulty re-adjusting to American life when they return to the USA. It also did not attend to the difficulties experienced by ATCKs in their friend relationships, as it focused on young people. Finally, as the focus was on parental attachment measures the study fails to consider that attachment styles can change throughout the life-cycle (Fraley, et al, 2011)

Despite the interpersonal difficulties reported some research suggests that TCKs and ATCKs are more welcoming of others into their community (Lewis, 2011). In one study 79 London adolescents, half of whom were TCKs, born abroad and returned to the UK, completed Multicultural Personality Questionnaire measures (MPQ) (Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009). This measure was designed to assess multicultural effectiveness amongst expatriate employees and students. Much like the Big Five personality inventory, the MPQ scale looks at five factors tailored specifically to predictions regarding multicultural success rather than general personality. These include cultural empathy, openmindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility. The non-TCK group was compared with the TCK group and results indicated that TCKs scored more highly in open-mindedness and cultural empathy than non-TCK peers. The authors concluded that personality is shaped by social and biographical factors. Other studies support this finding. TCKs identify themselves as having a broad world-view (Cameron, 2003) and demonstrate higher cross-cultural sensitivity (Straffon, 2003). In contrast to this, TCKs have a 'sharply expressed intolerance of narrow minded people' (Willis, et al, 1994, p. 35), or report 'intolerance' for narrow-mindedness' (Cameron, 2003). Both the Dewaele (2009) and Willis et al (1994) studies used the statistical analysis of psychometric tests to arrive at their results while the Lewis (2011) argument appears largely anecdotal and the Cameron (2003) study is based on self-report measures. This makes it difficult to ascertain how these features arise in friendships themselves. What it highlights is that, despite the difficulties TCKs have with social relationships; TCKs do have skills to apply in forming friendships with others. In fact, some research suggests TCKs are quick to make friends, and eighty percent of TCKs believe they can get along with anybody (Cottrell and Useem, 1993).

How friend relationships are formed and maintained is not described in any detail in the literature that I can locate, however, some authors suggest that TCKs move quickly through the layers of friendship formation described by social penetration theory (Edwards- Wertsch, 2011). Social penetration theory describes how people move from acquaintance to close social relationship. This is achieved through mutual exchanges of self-disclosure over a period of time. A reciprocal process of disclosure from one member in a dyadic relationship followed by disclosure from the other member of the dyad contributes to individuals' knowledge about one other and furthers their relationship (Dindia, 2000). Someone who never says anything about their own personal opinions, inner thoughts, deeper feelings and intimate wishes will be cast aside as a closed and defensive person (Jourard, 1971). There are, of course, cultural influences on the appropriate type of self-disclosure. In the USA an open style of disclosure about one's feelings is expected and encouraged, whereas in Japan this is considered inappropriate, but information about family, status and social position is entirely suitable for disclosure (Duck, 1991).

One argument is that while non-TCK peers are at the early stage of self-disclosure, the TCK is offering opinions on subjects at more intimate levels. When others do not reciprocate, the TCK may characterise that person as 'shallow' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Pollock and Van Reken (2001), suggest this could be due to the overseas experiences, where the TCK has more experience and therefore skill with entering into new relationships. The TCK may also have a store of knowledge and experiences relating to various topics, so they may feel they have something relevant to say about many topical issues. Additionally, they may have grown up in homes or countries where politics or religious issues were openly discussed, or even experienced firsthand. Finally, the TCK may feel a sense of urgency to discuss issues at a deeper level. Their experience of high mobility may engender a sense that if the relationship does not move forward quickly, it may not have time to develop. Unfortunately, it is unclear how Pollock and Van Reken arrived at these observations, beyond a mention of a survey of over 300 participants (Van Reken, 1986). It appears their observations are largely anecdotal and gleaned from various surveys, and perhaps not peer reviewed.

A sense of urgency TCKs experience in making friends is also described by Edwards- Wertsch (2011). She describes a 'forced extroversion' during her own experience of being a TCK in the military. She describes wanting to break into friendships quickly and using personal confessions to achieve this. If the confession is reciprocated a friendship was formed. She argues that military kids might be more willing to do this because they most likely will not be around long enough to deal

with any potential negative consequences from these confessions. It is not clear if this theme can be found in broader TCK communities and again appears largely anecdotal rather than grounded in rigorous methodology and analysis.

The effect of multiple losses leaves TCKs unwilling to risk further losses, and the TCK may distance themselves from other people in order to cope (Van Reken, 1986). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggest that TCKs use a variety of techniques to achieve this distance, including denial that the TCK cares for anyone else. The TCK may also let go of the friendship earlier than necessary or they may use anger as a shield against the pain of impending separation. The TCK may even go as far as refusing to feel the pain of separation and refuse to engage in good-byes. This can segue into emotional detachment from others whereby TCKs ‘simply refuse to let themselves care about or need anyone again’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 142). It is not entirely clear how the authors arrived at these conclusions, but it does seem reflected in the work of other researchers (e.g. Werkman et al, 1981; Huff, 2001). However, no one study seems to bring together these multiple findings in a rich description of the friendship experience. Other research can further facilitate our understanding to the features of friend relationships among TCKs. I will now turn my attention to TCK identity research and what this has described about aspects of TCKs experience of friendship.

### **2.5.5 TCK and identity**

A popular notion in the TCK literature is that TCKs gravitate to one another (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). This could be because a sense of belonging for the TCK exists among other TCKs (Fail, et al, 2004; Greenholtz and Kim, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001), or because they tend to identify more closely with others who have experienced an internationally mobile lifestyle (Gregory, 2002). There could be greater security in these relationships, although this has not been articulated. However, identity research can facilitate our understanding of friendship for TCKs and has much to stimulate further inquiry and debate about friendship experiences.

A variety of studies articulating the TCK identity struggle have made broad statements about the relationships between TCKs and others. For example, Walters and Aston-Cuff, (2009) interviewed 8 women about their life history, using ‘life story’ interviewing technique. They wanted to know how the lived experience of being a TCK influenced the development of a sense of identity. The researchers found six themes related to their experiences of being a TCK. These included: disruption of transition; stability of spirituality; pervasiveness of being different; silencing of voice; sense of belonging; being a woman. As the researchers were interested in the development of

identity they did not consider the multiple contexts in which identity could be affected. That is, they did not consider other models of identity, such as social or individual. They did, however, point out that those who are raised internationally might not follow the same developmental patterns as those who are not raised internationally. They were concerned with whether current developmental models provide appropriate ways to study TCKs, especially in the context of being a TCK woman. Interestingly the researchers did find that the TCK participants discovered their 'true' selves in forming relationships with other TCKs. This finding supports similarity theories of friendship, but implies a core self rather than a flexible identity compatible with a symbolic interactionist view. They did argue that the TCKs sense of belonging was stronger with other TCKs. This was where 'a common understanding, a common ground and a common culture were shared' (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009, p. 767). Findings may have been different if the researchers had studied a different population of TCKs, as they focused entirely on Missionary TCKs. The findings may also have been different if the research questions had been directed toward the friendship experience itself rather than the development of identity, or if they had considered identity in multiple contexts.

In Schaetti's (2000) study of sixteen TCKs, in depth interviews were conducted in which participants discussed their identity heritage, development, resolution and expression as well as their identity belonging. Schaetti (2000) proposed a model of TCK identity development across the life-span, which suggested that TCK identity development is a search for identity congruence. She argued that this search is typically initiated by an oppressively marginalising event, which makes the TCK conscious of the fact that they are 'different' from others, and is resolved only when TCKs are introduced to the term TCK. This provides them with a map with which to become intentional in their search for identity congruence.

This finding is echoed in other work that argues TCKs are different from non-TCKs which leads them to become socially marginalised when they return to their passport country (Downie, 1976; Gerner, Perry, et al, 1992). It could be that the TCK is socially anxious and left out due to their lack of knowledge of local and cultural details, which is often bewildering to those around them (MaCaig, 1996). Downie (1976) found that American TCKs who returned to the USA for university had to put aside their multi-cultural backgrounds to 'fit in'. These TCKs were not able to express themselves as a whole person because the majority of their peers would only validate the American part of their identity. TCKs struggle to clarify who they are in relation to others when only one part of their identity is being validated (Downie, 1976). This could account for the finding that ninety percent of TCKs feel 'out of sync' with their peers. (Cottrell and Useem, 1993b). It is possible that social identity theories of friendship can explain this finding. That is TCKs may not experience

identity support as they are ‘different’ from their peers and as a result may struggle to form friendships with non-TCKs. This is of course conjecture, as it was not explored in the relevant studies. What has been articulated is some of the variations in social identity that may occur.

TCKs often have to negotiate their expressed identity in relation to the dominant culture (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). There are four possible ways a TCK could relate to their cultural environment; these are described in Table 1.

**Table 2:** Possible relational patterns for a person living in any dominant culture.

<b>Foreigner</b> Look different Think different	<b>Hidden immigrant</b> Look alike Think different
<b>Adopted</b> Look different Think alike	<b>Mirror</b> Look alike Think alike

Taken from Pollock and Van Reken (2001, p.53).

While it is feasible that non-TCKs will move between relational patterns, the difference for the TCK is that this occurs frequently due to their highly mobile lifestyle (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). This can have both positive and negative consequence for TCKs. As mentioned earlier, TCKs may demonstrate a great deal of cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability (Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Straffon, 2003). Alternatively, they frequently experience identity confusion.

Given their mobile lifestyle TCKs may become ‘cultural chameleons’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 92). That is, they readily adopt the cultures, mannerisms, and languages of their environment so as to blend in. To enable them to act in accordance with the dominant culture TCKs may be able to draw from cultural information stored in their fragmented identities. This skill makes it easier for non-TCKs in the dominant culture to relate to the TCK and for TCKs to function with greater ease in that culture. Hall, (1996) suggests that in these cases identity is both strategic and positional. What, though, happens when TCKs cannot do this, or do not want to do this?

While a person’s identity may not be rigid, it is more or less stable by late adolescence (Erikson, 1980). However, achieving a coherent identity is a challenge for TCKs because their identity is subjected to frequent challenges (Fail, et al, 2004). Three quarters of all TCKs from the USA reported feeling ‘different’ from those who have never lived overseas. One TCK reported, ‘I don't



feel different, I AM different.’ (Useem, 1993, p.1). This can have an impact on the relationship experiences of TCKs, and some researcher have attempted to address this from various paradigms.

Schaetti (1998, 2001) reported that a sense of marginality exists among TCKs during stages of identity formation. This is the experience whereby TCKs don't fit perfectly into any particular one of the cultures to which they have been exposed or interacted, but rather they may fit comfortably on the edges or in the ‘margins’, of each. The concept of liminality, which describes a state of existing in the gap between fixed realities, has received attention in other studies (Greenoltz and Kim, 2009; Schaetti and Ramsay, 1999b; Wurgaft, 2006). However, it is seldom related to the experience TCKs have with friendship. It more clearly relates to issues of self-identity. For example Bennett (1993) described a marginal identity state as having two variants, encapsulated and constructive. The encapsulated marginal (or TCK) feels lost among their constituent cultural components, successfully playing a number of parts as defined by the environment, but never feeling at home, or ‘belonging’ anywhere. This notion has its roots in the concept of marginal man, but should not be confused with it. TCKs are different from the original person the work described, i.e. the permanent immigrant (Stonequist, 1935; Park, 1928).

By contrast the constructive marginal is able to integrate their fundamental cultural parts by creating a unique and separate multicultural self. This concept is supported by other work that explores cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) in the TCK (Greenholtz and Kim, 2009). Being a constructive marginal can be complicated for friendships as the individual is disadvantaged around others who they perceive as being not as similarly open-minded (Schaetti and Ramsey, 1999b). TCKs in their passport country may be blamed for ‘lacking conviction’ or displaying ‘confused loyalties’ instead of being congratulated for their grasp of the complexity of the human condition, as perhaps Obama realised when accused by his peers.

‘To feel perpetually out of step’, or ‘marginalised’ in their relationships, may render TCKs as indecisive and noncommittal in relationships, resistant to deeper levels of intimacy, and ultimately as having difficulty establishing and maintaining long-term relationships (McCaig, 1994). These traits may appear during the overseas posting, but are more likely to manifest themselves as TCKs make the transition to life at ‘home’. Gaw, (2007) found that TCKs’ experience of marginality affected their academic, social, and personal functioning. This is not uncommon for adolescent TCKs, but equally social functioning can be affected and a sense of marginality found in ATCKs (McCaig, 1994). Many ATCKs eventually come to terms with issues like culture shock and a

feeling that one does not belong anywhere, while others may struggle with these issues for their entire lives (Lewis, 2011).

TCKs who are not able to resolve their various fragmented identities may communicate this loss by engaging with a 'negative identity' (Erikson, 2008, p. 236). This is where being 'different' is the TCKs identity. It could be argued that despite the negative identity this is the price they will pay for their experience of being raised internationally and this 'difference' need not be negative in itself. Unfortunately being different and accepting this can be perceived of by others as arrogant (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001) or as 'aloofness' (Van Reken, 2008). Willis, et al, (1994) utilised a phenomenological approach to demonstrate how TCKs solve the problem of reproducing their own cultural forms. This study problematised identity, and produced several disparate findings about TCKs' interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, they reported that while research has found that 69% of TCKs have felt alienated or left out at some point in their lives, they feel this is a price to pay for their experiences and would not trade those experiences for any other, thus supporting the functionality of a negative identity.

Other research suggests that because non-TCK peers may lack an understanding of the unique experiences and lifestyle of TCKs, TCKs often put that aspect of their identity to one side in relationships with others (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009). For example, Walters and Aston-Cuff (2009) found that female TCKs might experience a 'silencing of voice' in relations to others. This involves not voicing an opinion in order to avoid conflict and to be pleasing to others. Of particular interest in this study was that TCKs often project a 'false self' in order to be accepted in a relationship and report that it is only with other TCKs that they can be their true self. TCKs discover their true selves in forming relationships with other TCKs (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009). Does this also happen to men? Van Reken (2008) suggests that perhaps it does and that even an 'elitist' such as President Obama is not immune. Some research suggests that although there are some gender differences in attitudes about self and family relationships, the general trends are similar between the sexes (Werkman et al, 1981). It is possible this could be found with attitudes to peer and social relationships.

Studies such as these suggest that TCKs have to change who they are to fit in with others, and in doing so they may lose a part of themselves. Despite this, TCKs are three times more likely to report a sense of belonging in terms of relationships with others than in terms of places (Fail, 1995). The breadth of these findings and the various theories used to examine them can seem confusing and conflicting. However, if we adopt phenomenological approach to identity, where who we are, is

not a 'core' self but an ever evolving and reflective process these findings illuminate both our understanding of friend relationships and the concept of self for TCKs.

### **2.5.6 Implications of TCK research**

In light of what has been discussed when considering friendship for TCKs, it appears that friendship formation and maintenance can be difficult for TCKs. To a large degree human relationships are based upon reciprocity, mutual disclosure and seeking out people who can confirm and validate ones identity. For TCKs these things seem complex, challenging and interconnected. Factors related to a search for identity seem to inhibit the process and maintenance of friendships, or perhaps the process and maintenance of friendship complicates the search for identity. Whichever way the argument goes the literature fails to provide a clear description of the issues TCKs encounter when forming and maintaining friendships.

If we are to offer useful psychological support or interventions for TCKs struggling with issues with their self concept or in their friendships it would be useful to have a clear understanding of how they themselves understand and explain their friendships within the context of being or having been an internationally mobile person. Counselling psychology has its roots in humanistic as well as existential-phenomenological psychology where the focus is within engagement of subjective experience (Strawbridge and Woolfe, 2003). It is hoped that the current research, which utilises a qualitative study grounded in a phenomenological approach will provide a useful account of friendship for TCKs. It is hoped that by addressing some of the gaps in the literature those who work with TCKs in clinical and other settings and will have a greater understanding of their worldview and the issues that affect their peer relationships. In addition the social constructionist model of counselling is based on the view that the shared meaning making between counsellor and client is achieved through a system of language (Becvar and Becvar, 2003). Therapy is, therefore, a process by which the client's history and worldview is recounted, heard and understood by a counselling psychologist. This process involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning that evolved as a useful coping strategy for dealing with the environment, but ceased to be useful and became maladaptive (Russo, 2005). It is hoped that the current study will increase the knowledge base for Counselling Psychologists and other clinicians to draw from in their therapeutic relationship. Thus ATCKs idiographic experiences of friendship with a 'light social constructionist approach' are of interest in the current research.

Gaw (2007) reported the need for professionals to acknowledge TCKs and provide stronger support. At present there are few references to counselling TCKs. When looking for a professional to assist a TCK, it may be helpful to find someone who has some knowledge of the mobile lifestyle.

*‘...finding counsellors who understand and know how to navigate the cross cultural experience has always been a struggle for myself and many other TCKs. The large majority of the counselling community is still unaware of the TCK population and its issues...’* (B. Royer, email correspondence, January 2008).

## **2.6 Research aim and questions**

The majority of the TCK research of friendships begins with problematising identity, where various conclusions about friendship are described by default. It is clear that friendship is, in part, a response to people, and that parts of the identity are denied or developed in order to create these friendships. It is also clear that friendship can be a challenge for TCKs, and that they may prefer the company of other TCK as this provides a secure base for them to explore their identity. However, the research generates a number of questions about TCKs friend relationships and identity and various gaps in the literature can be found. Specifically, no research exclusively addresses the experience of friend relationships among TCKs and particularly TCKs from the UK, or provides a rich description of the TCK experience of friendship. Where arguments are made for the experience of friendship the majority of the conclusions are drawn from studying an American population. Additionally, the affect of friend relationships on the experience of identity, and the reverse of this, has not received attention in the literature. Finally, the literature is most often used to meet pedagogical application whereas the current research will address the clinical application of the findings.

The current study considers the phenomenology of friendship and how TCK explain this phenomenon. The overall aim was to provide a rich and detailed description of the experience of friendship for ATCKs from the UK.

The specific research question was: What is the experience of friendship like for ATCKs from the UK? Within in this other related and more specific questions were considered.

- 1) What are the challenges, if any, for ATCKs in their friendships?
- 2) What are the rewards, if any, for ATCKs in their friendships?
- 3) Does the experience of friendship affect the ATCKs’ sense of identity?

These phenomenological questions could be usefully addressed using a qualitative method. This will be discussed in greater detail in the method section.

## **2.8 Summary**

The literature on Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and friendship is relatively fragmented and undefined. There are a variety of studies of TCKs and ATCKs that tell us something, in general, about the friendship experiences of TCKs and ATCKs. These findings are usually articulated as a smaller part of a wider study that refers mainly to the TCKs experience of identity. What seems to be missing is a rich account of the friendship experience itself. The current research addresses this by taking a close and qualitative approach to questions about the friendship experiences of ATCKs. This study does not utilise a pre-existing theoretical framework for analysing identity or friendship because, according to Smith (2004), this may impact upon information provided by the participants and impose constraints on the analysis.

The current study specifically examines friendship experiences of ATCKs in a thorough and contextualised way. That is, ATCKs' descriptions of their friendship experiences are considered in the context of being internationally mobile. Additionally, analysis of ATCKs' reflections on being an ATCK aims to scrutinise the systemic dimension of friendship between ATCKs and their peers. This qualitative examination of the ATCKs' accounts will help psychologists and others who may work with TCKs and ATCKs to understand their experience of friendship by engaging with it from multiple perspectives. The current research does not open with a specific theoretical framework, as this is not in keeping with the goals of the IPA. It is to this choice of methodology I now turn my attention.

### **3.0 Method**

This chapter is concerned with a description of the method for the current research. The aim is to provide clarification of the concepts utilised that facilitate the rigour of qualitative research, ultimately achieving transparency and systematicity (Meyrick, 2006). IPA was the chosen methodology for this research; this is deconstructed and defended through discussion of validity in section 3.1 and the epistemological and ontological underpinnings in section 3.2. The researchers own background is made explicit in section 3.3. This is to make the reader aware of the researchers own possible biases and act as a validity safe guard (Brocki and Wearden, 2006). Ethical permission for this study was granted by the University of East London Ethics Committee, which is outlined in section 3.4. The chapter concludes with an outline of the participants' demographics in section 3.5.

#### **3.1 Validity**

Qualitative practice has grown from the recognition that ontological and epistemological positions must be acknowledged and considered as part of the research process. With regard to IPA, it is appropriate for the researcher to make explicit their background and the conscious preconceptions relating to their analysis of the data in order that the interpretative stage is as transparent as possible and thus enable to reader to judge for themselves how plausible the interpretations are (Brocki and Wearden, 2006). The interpretation of findings should be presented with reflection, that is, the consideration of alternatives and the owning of biases (Elliott, Fisher and Rennie, 1999).

As a validity safeguard, I utilised a number of evaluation frameworks that have been developed to measure the quality and rigour of IPA research (Yardley, 2008; Elliott, Fisher and Rennie, 1999). For example, I utilized peer review and supervision to strengthen the credibility and validity of my research. The peer review consisted of four colleagues who were all completing IPA research. In addition my academic supervisor provided feedback and commentary for my analysis of the data. Supervision focused on the discussion of emerging themes and data convergences and divergences. This process of discussion and credibility checking should strengthen the validity of the data. More generally, I have tried to ensure that the reporting of my analysis is both systematic and transparent (Meyrick, 2006).

Finally a reflective journal was kept for the documentation of process issues arising from the research. An example of this can be found in appendix 14. Reflexivity is considered a key aspect of

qualitative research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Discussions of themes arising from this process, which may have influenced analysis, are addressed in the findings and the discussion (a full reflective journal is included on the CD of raw data).

### **3.2 Epistemological position**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a qualitative research method concerned with the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences. It is concerned with the multi-dimensional aspects of their response to their experience. The participants and researchers concerns are with the embodied, cognitive, affective and existential focus with the phenomenon of interest. In the case of the current research the experience of interest is friendship. Three key areas of philosophical debate inform IPA.

Firstly, IPA is informed by Phenomenology (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This is a philosophical approach to the study of experience and what that experience is like in terms of what matters to the individual. It focuses on the world as individuals, in their specific socio-cultural and historical contexts, subjectively experience it. The result is a mapping out of the common meanings people use to describe a phenomena as well as differences across accounts. Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre have each contributed to the development of central ideas that inform phenomenology and have lead to the view it takes of the person as a 'person-in-context' (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006, p. 106). That is, the person is 'embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 21). The interest Phenomenology takes in individual experience is relevant to psychological research, as it facilitates discovery of the diversity and variability of the human experience (Willig, 2001). IPA acknowledges that the associations people ascribe to experiences are the result of exchanges between people in the social world (Willig, 2001)

Secondly, IPA is informed by Hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. Hermeneutics is concerned with learning the methods and processes of interpretation itself. It seeks to uncover the intentions of the author, to understand the relationship between a texts production (its historical context) and the context of the interpretation (it's relevance in the present). Several philosophers contributed to our understanding of Hermeneutics. Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer each elaborated on key points, which developed IPA as an interpretative method. While IPA attends to participants' meanings of phenomena and aims to get close to these, it acknowledges that direct access is not possible (Willig, 2001)

IPA acknowledges that experiences can only be made sense of through the interpretations of the researcher, this notion is further developed through and understating of the hermeneutic circle (Smith, 2007). This is concern with the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole. To understand any part, one must look at the whole and to understand the whole one must look at the parts (Smith, 2007). This provides a way for IPA researchers to think about method. While IPA data analysis is described in a step-by-step fashion, the key notion is that it is iterative. That is IPA gains entry into the meaning of the text in a variety of ways at various levels, all of which relate to one another and which will also offer different insights on the part-whole coherence (Smith, 2007). Analysis moves beyond capturing individual experience by recognising the researcher in context (discussed section 3.3). Thus the analysis of the phenomena under investigation is a result of the interactions of both the researcher and the participants. The data analysis is both phenomenological, taking into consideration the participants accounts, and interpretative, taking into consideration the researchers interpretations of the participants' accounts. For the researcher to be able to unlock the meaning of the participants' experiences they must meaningfully interpret how the participants make sense of their world. In this way IPA makes use of a double hermeneutic (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This process involves the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world and the researcher trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As such, IPA requires that the researcher is reflective and explicitly present their own particular perspectives thereby revealing any influences on the analysis (Willig, 2001). Please refer to section 3.3 for discussion of the researcher.

Finally, IPA is influenced by idiography (Smith, 2004). This is concern for the particular, which is in contrast to most psychology that seeks to make claims about the group as a whole (and thus looses something of the quality of the individual). IPA is concerned with offering a detailed and nuanced analysis of particular cases, as may occur with a single case study (Smith, 2004). Frequently though, IPA is used for sample sizes greater than one and facilitates discussion of shared themes across participants as well as individual variation (Smith, 2004). IPA is idiographic in that it allows the researcher to describe the groups being investigated while also describing the individual members comprising the group (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). That is, IPA allows the researcher to determine connections between themes within and across cases. Additionally, IPA allows the researcher to make connections with existing literature with the aim of further developing theories, while also allowing unanticipated theories to emerge. This inductive nature of IPA is a central feature of the method (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).



‘Research method flows from one’s position on ontology, epistemology and axiology’ (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 132). In locating IPA as the chosen method for this study we must consider several key concepts which taken together set the context for a study; the paradigm. Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest that there are three main paradigmatic frameworks: realist/post positivist, critical/ideological and interpretive/constructivist. Each of these frameworks varies in their position regarding ontology (the nature of reality and being); epistemology (the study of knowledge, its acquisition and the relationship between the knower and the known); axiology (the role of values in the research process); and methodology (the procedure used to conduct the research) (Ponterotto, 2005).

IPA can be located within the interpretative/constructivist paradigm, where ontologically it takes a *relativist* position (Willig, 2008). IPA is concerned with the subjective ways in which individuals perceive the world rather than the objective nature of it. Accordingly, an objective reality does not exist because experiences are perceived differently between individuals (Willig, 2008). What one ‘knows’ as reality is produced through ones own representations and accounts of a phenomenon (Burr, 2003). However, IPA does accept the basis of symbolic interactionism, which stops it from falling into ‘methodological solipsism’ (Willig, 2008, p. 70).

Symbolic interactionism (Willig, 2008) or contextual constructionism (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000) epistemologies both share the common assumption that there is no one reality that can be revealed through collection and interpretation of data. They acknowledge that the researcher and the subject of the research are implicated in the data analysis and that ‘objectivity’ is replaced by ‘permeability’, which is the capacity of theories to be influenced by ‘encounters with observations’ (Stiles, 1993, cited by Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000, p. 9). They also acknowledge that all knowledge is local, provisional and situation-dependent and findings from data analysis will be influenced by the context in which data was collected and analysed. However, grounding for the findings can be accomplished if the researcher provides actual descriptions of the participants understanding of the phenomena, as is accomplished through the use of direct quotes (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000). In addition, these epistemological positions can make use of the critical realist stance which grounds narratives in ‘social practices whose underlying logical and structure can in principle, be discovered (Parker, 1996, cited by Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000, p. 9).

IPA takes a *realist* approach to the study of knowledge (Willig, 2008). A realist approach to knowledge asserts that a single external world exists separately from our depictions of it

(Ponterotto, 2005). Thus, IPA aims to tell us something about what and how people think about a phenomenon through the narratives they use to describe it (Willig, 2008). In this way IPA draws from the critical/ideological, paradigm, which aims to emancipate the participants of a research project (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm draws from the critical realist stance, which argues that reality is defined by oppressive influences from social, historical and political factors. IPA overlooks the possibility that language constructs reality and is, therefore, dissimilar to more hard-line social constructionism. However, it does recognise the representational validity of language in constructing phenomena. In this way IPA takes a 'light constructionist stance' (Eatough and Smith, 2006, p. 485). Talk may function to achieve interpersonal objectives, but IPA suggests that the lived experience is far more than historically situated interactions between people (Eatough and Smith, 2006). Viewing 'lived experience' solely as a linguistic and discursive construction would not sufficiently represent the complexity and observed realities of the ATCKs' meaning of friendship. Thus the present study takes the view that people have an active influence over and are creatively involved with constituting, as opposed to constructing, the development of their sense of meaning. This constitution of meaning is influenced by the interpretive action taking place between people (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), and thus avoids hard-line constructionism as may be utilised in a discursive analysis of phenomena.

At the same time, IPA accepts that conceptions of phenomena are achieved through meaningful interpretation of the participants' narratives by the researcher (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The knowledge produced is thus reflexive as it depends on the researchers own standpoint. The axiology, or role of the researcher is acknowledged to be essential to capturing the lived experience of the participant (Ponterotto, 2005).

In summary the position of this research and researcher is not one of extreme relativism, which denies the material world of the 'real' experience of friendship. Rather it takes, as its focus the ways friendship is understood in the context of social interactions. Implicit within this position is the notion that knowledge and knowledge production is relative to the person, the person's position and interest in life experience (Willig, 2001). Furthermore, knowledge is relative to the setting and is contextualized between individuals. In this way, knowledge and what we can know is seen to contain multiple, fluid realities. Thus the emerging knowledge produced in this research is provisory and temporary, typical only to the group of ATCKs located in the context that produced it. Across this provisory and temporary snap shot of meanings, institutional practices and common group elements such as transition, cultural exposure and gender, which share elements of consistency and continuity that can be captured. The advantage of taking the relativist approach to

understanding friendship is that knowledge is arrived at through the exploration of multiple understandings. These understandings are not judged for their accuracy and truthfulness against a perceived external truth, but rather each participant's voice is recognised as being equally important (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

IPA was initially developed within health psychology (Smith, 1996, 2004). It has since evolved as a method utilised in social and counselling psychology research (Smith, 2004) because it enables the researcher to investigate participants' experiences, cognitions and accounts of phenomena. Coming to understand the multi-layered and multi-faceted meaning making systems that people draw on is especially important for clinicians as we have a responsibility to ask critical questions of taken for granted knowledge (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003). IPA is especially appropriate for the current research as it focuses on friendship, which can be subjectively defined according to personal experiences (Hinde, 1997). In addition, IPA will facilitate a discussion of identity, which has been defined according to a symbolic interactionist approach. IPA has been used in research that examines relationship experiences (Jarman, Walsh and DeLacy, 2005; Redmond, Larkin and Harrop, 2010), as well as identity issues (Keuss and Willett, 2009), but it is hoped the current research will expand this legacy, particularly for TCKs and ATCKs.

### **3.3 The researcher as a person-in-context**

It should be noted that this research is the reflective position of this author who is the primary researcher and analyst.

I am an ATCK from the UK, currently residing in the UK and reading the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at UEL. My interest in conducting this research came from both professional and personal experiences of the Third Culture phenomenon.

As a young person I relocated overseas from the UK six times between the ages of two and eighteen. At the age of eighteen I returned to the UK to study my undergraduate degree. I recall feeling very out of place. I chose a small town university and was instantly identified as being a little bit 'different'. Upon completing my studies and a brief period of employment in London, I returned 'home' to Hong Kong and worked with other TCKs in an International school. I observed a number TCKs struggling to (re)integrate with their 'home' countries and I began researching the topic of overseas experience in young people.

My experiences were likely to produce preconceptions which, according to (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), are impossible to predict prior to engaging with the interpretive process. I approached this research with various experiences of my own and a host of negative information from the literature. Participants were aware of my travelling background as well as my attendance on the Counselling Psychology course at UEL and my trainee status. A full reflective journal was kept during the research process (Appendix 14 for an example, or CD for the full notes).

### **3.4 Ethics**

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the University of East London Ethics committee (Appendix 1) and granted (Appendix 2). A change in methodology was made following a review of the research and permission to continue was sought from the Ethics Committee. (Appendix 3) and granted (Appendix 4). Additionally, difficulty with recruitment required a change to the recruitment method and an addendum was sent to the committee (Appendix 5) and confirmed (Appendix 6).

### **3.5 Participants**

Three male and five female participants were recruited for this study.

*Inclusion criteria:* Participants spoke fluent English and were of aged between 19 and 54 years of age. They were from the UK, with one or both of their parents holding a British Passport. Their parents moved abroad for work purposes (not for permanent immigration) when they were between 0-18 years of age. They resided overseas for more than one year during their developmental years (ages 0-18 years). For the purpose of the current research developmental years was taken from the UN guidelines for developmental years from 0-18 years (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990, Article One). They had some memories of the time they spent overseas. For the participants to discuss their experiences in detail during the interviews a value of one year was attributed to the definition of 'time spent overseas'. They returned to the UK for study/work purposes at least once in their lifetime (their parents may have stayed overseas or returned with them). No specification was made for number of countries lived in. One participant in the sample was of bicultural heritage this was considered to be unavoidable in order to meet the required number of interviewees.

*Exclusion criteria:* People who may have spent time overseas but had no memories of the events

overseas that took place were not included in this study.

Whilst remaining sensitive to confidentiality by using pseudonyms, I have provided sufficient details about the participants demographically, to enable the readers to orientate themselves to the sample. Table 1 provides this information.

**Table 3:** Participant demographics and TCK background.

Participant	Pseudonym*	Ethnicity	Age in years	Gender M/F	Age moved overseas	Number of moves overseas	Age returned to UK	Parents occupation	Length of time in the UK following last move in years	Reside overseas as an adult	Currently living in the UK
1	Jake	Other British	46	M	12	2	17	Engineer	20	NO	YES
2	John	White British	33	M	2	4	10 for 1 year. 15 for boarding school.	Armed Forces	10	YES	NO
3	Lucy	White British	45	F	6	4	9 for two years. 18 for university.	Armed Forces	7	YES	YES
4	Alli	Other British	32	F	Born overseas	1	16	Sales	16	NO	YES
5	Ellen	White British	25	F	11	1	18	Engineer	8	NO	YES
6	Nancy	White British	38	F	4	3	12	Engineer	25	NO	YES
7	Dora	White British	54	F	3	2	14	Armed Forces	16	YES	YES
8	Daniel	White British	53	M	1.5	4	17	Armed Forces	16	YES	YES

\* Pseudonyms are used to preserve participant anonymity

## **4.0 Procedure**

### **4.1 Recruitment**

Originally a purposive sample was to be recruited via Facebook (Appendix 7). This method did not return as many participants as anticipated and opportunity sampling was utilised to recruit the necessary number of participants. I asked various friends and colleagues if they would suggest anyone who might be interested in participating. The first three participants were recruited via this method. Further participants were then identified using snowballing. Emails were sent to people who volunteered to be interviewed (Appendix 8).

### **4.2 Informing and gaining consent**

An information sheet outlining the aims of the research was given to participants in advance of the interview. The letter outlined the aims of the research, participation requirements, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and the potential advantages and disadvantages of participating (Appendix 9). This information was given again verbally at the time of the interview and participants were invited to ask any questions. Participants were asked to sign a written consent form, which included permission to record the interviews this was counter signed by the researcher (Appendix 9).

#### **4.2.1 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality was established with each participant. Participants were informed that all personal identifying information concerning them would be kept completely confidential by the use of an ID number and pseudonym. Providing an initial in place of real names protected the names of people mentioned during the interviews. Participants were informed that only basic descriptive information about them would be used in the thesis in keeping with good qualitative research practice (Elliott, Fisher and Rennie, 1999). Participants were also told that anonymised transcripts might be shown to research supervisors and colleagues. In keeping with the British Psychological Society code of conduct participants were informed that all information disclosed by participants during the interviews would be kept confidential unless it caused concern for the safety of the participants or others. The UEL ethics committee specifies that all sensitive research material should be kept for 10 years following completion of the research project. Participants were informed that all material would be kept securely until this time and destroyed thereafter.

### **4.2.3 Potential distress**

It was thought unlikely that the subject matter for discussion during the interviews would cause participants distress. However, subjects of loss, if raised could have been cause for some discomfort. Participants were informed that they could refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the interview at any time. At times, I also checked with participants discussing sensitive issues that they were capable of continuing their interview. Following the interviews participants were given debriefing information, which included a list of organization they could contact for support if they felt this to be necessary (Appendix 10).

### **4.3 Interviews**

My belief was that TCKs would have given at least some thought to their friendships and self-concept, but they were emailed prior to interviews requesting that they consider their friendships experiences both overseas and in the UK (Appendix 11)

Open-question interviews were conducted either in the participants' homes, places of business or via SKYPE. Interviews were recorded with the participants' permission using a digital MP3 player or the online MP3 recorder in the case of SKYPE. A semi-structured interview schedule, based on broad themes from the literature, was developed as a guide for use during interviews (Appendix 12). The content and structure of the interview schedule was developed in conjunction with a thorough reading of the relevant TCK literature and with the assistance of the research supervisor. This was used flexibly during the interviews to facilitate conversation. The iterative nature of IPA sanctioned the review of the guide after each interview such that improvements could be made in response to unexpected and interesting topics that emerged. Following the first interview, subtle changes were made to the structure of the interview (Appendix 13) to facilitate ease of the interview. This final schedule was then used as the guide for remaining interviews. A reflective diary was kept during the interview process to increase reflexivity (Appendix 14).

Interviews lasted between 40 and 80 minutes.

### **4.4 Data organisation**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and the audio recordings encrypted in a password protected computer file. Each transcript was page and line numbered to facilitate transparency and



systematic coding. Each transcription was identified using the participant initial and number during analysis. For the purpose of presentation, participants were given a pseudonym.

#### **4.5 Convention for presenting excerpts**

Square brackets [ ] denote omissions of text considered repetitive or irrelevant by the researcher.

Words in square brackets denote words inserted by the researcher to clarify the topic or concept the participant is referring to.

A series of three dots ... denotes a pause in speech.

Words in capitals denote an emphasis heard by the researcher.

A dash - indicates a broken or interrupted word.

Comments in the text in brackets ( ) indicate gestures, or sounds that participants made during the interview either heard or recalled by the researcher during the transcribing process.

Data excerpts are italicised and identified by the participant's pseudonym. Page and start and end line numbers of the excerpt are also given. For example, Jake, p. 24, L. 561-569 would indicate that Jake said italicised text on page 24, from line 561 to line 569.

To preserve to anonymity of people the participants described during the interview an initial was used in place of their full name in the text.

Four super-ordinate themes were generated from the data, each comprising a number of subordinate themes. The themes are not discrete entities, but should be read as interrelated. The themes are shown in table 4 and described in further detail in the sections to follow. A worked example of the first ten pages of the IPA process is included in Appendix 15, along with a reflective journal for this case, and the development of themes in Appendix 16 (a full worked example and all other reflective journals can be found on the enclosed CD with the raw data).

## 4.6 Data analysis

The IPA process and procedure described by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) was used to analyse the interviews and transcripts. A brief overview of this is presented in Table 3.

**Table 4:** The stages of IPA data analysis.

Stage	Process and Procedure for IPA analysis
1	<i>Reading and re-reading:</i> This is the process whereby the analyst immerses them self in the original data. This includes the transcript and the audio recording.
2	<i>Initial noting:</i> This involves examining the semantic content of the language used. The analyst notes anything of interest in the text recording 1) key objects of concern, 2) the meaning these have to the participant 3) developing and interpretation for why or how the participant has these concerns.
3	<i>Developing emergent themes:</i> The analyst attempts to reduce the data by focusing on the initial notes and developing themes from discrete parts of the transcript and ordering them chronologically.
4	<i>Searching for connections across emergent themes:</i> This involves mapping how the themes fit together.
5	<i>Moving to the next case:</i> In keeping with IPA's idiographic commitment the researcher brackets their knowledge of previous themes to allow new themes to emerge.
6	<i>Looking for patterns across cases:</i> This involves looking across the cases and finding connections between them.

Adapted from Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 79-107.

## 5.0 Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis carried out on the eight participants described in Table 2 in the previous chapter (refer to page 29)

**Table 5:** Table of Super-ordinate themes and the associated subordinate themes.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme
The challenges of friendship	Insufficient autonomy to form lasting friendship
	Lack of understanding between ATCKs and non-TCKs
	Negative beliefs about people from the UK: The ‘English/British’
	Keeping in touch with others as a challenge to maintaining friendship
Multiple identities in response to friendship	Feeling ‘different’ from others
	‘Faking’ it to fit in with others
	Being ‘independent’ from others
	A ‘shared’ identity with others
The psychological impact of friendship	Grief about the loss of friendship
	Friendship as stressful: anxiety and fear in friendships
	Lack of strong attachments to peers
Valued characteristics of friendship	Open-mindedness as essential to friendship formation and maintenance
	Supportiveness as an important feature of friendship

## **5.1 The challenges of friendship**

This theme conveys the various difficulties that the participants described in forming and maintaining friendships with others.

### **5.1.1 Insufficient autonomy to form lasting friendships**

In the context of friendships each participant reported a sense of being unable to control their environment or indicated that they were unable to exert any influence over their situation, either contextually or socially. The lack of control created obstacles forming lasting friendships. In some cases the impediment was because the ATCKs censored themselves because they felt responsible for others, in other cases it was simply because they had to relocate again. In all cases friendship experiences were affected.

This theme appears first because all of the participants' responses to the first question I asked during the interview began with them telling me the details of their overseas experience. For example, how many times their parents had changed jobs, the variety of countries they had resided in or the number of schools they attended. I was struck with a sense of them being pushed from pillar to post and how they struggled to recall friendships in this haze of movement. In addition, I noticed that my reaction to their stories made me feel as though I was not in control of the interview. I had asked about friendship, and they were telling me about their history of relocation. As a trainee psychologist I often use my feeling as a barometer of what my client is experiencing. I felt this reaction to their stories was useful and used it to unpack some of the themes during my data analysis. My sense of lacking control during the interview was reflective of the participants' experiences of friendship in the context of being a TCK.

In the following passage Alli explained that she was used to her friends 'just' leaving. The way in which she described her predicament sounded passive. 'Just' intensified the occurrence of her friends leaving and getting 'desperately upset' wouldn't make any difference. Her narrative sounded quite philosophical to me, as though Alli had accepted her fate and there was no alternative to the recurring loss of friendships. To rebel against the situation would have been fruitless and thus Alli revealed that an inability to control her situation had a direct effect on her relationships, that is, they were lost.

*Um, but I think I don't even think I got desperately upset because I just was so used to that's what happened. Your friends came, their dad's did their jobs for a bit, Mum's did their jobs and then they went back to wherever they came. Alli: p. 2, L. 46-50.*

John was also resigned to the occurrence of loss in his friendships. He used the word 'fluid' to describe friendships. This caused me to imagine water, one of nature's most powerful forces and something that cannot be controlled (without considerable feats of engineering). In a sense John was caught up in forces beyond his control, which resulted in the frequent loss of friendship. John indicated that his father's postings 'break up' friendships. In doing this John seemed to be saying that he had no choice, that his father's job caused the damage to his relationships rather than anything he himself did. Finally, John's tone when explaining the length of time he was in any place was incredulous. It seemed as though he could not believe he was expected to make or maintain friendships given the circumstances he found himself in.

**John:** *The friendship is, is just constantly in this fluid state. Friendships are fluid, because either they are going to get posted on, or I'm, my dad was going to get posted on. And so as a consequence you, your friendships break up and, you know, reform really quickly. I mean for example, my shortest place that I was at any one location was nine months where I was at camp. The shortest time I was in a school was for SIX WEEKS before we moved from it, right? John: p. 21, L. 469-479*

In the next excerpt Lucy described how she had been able to stop pretending in her relationships. She attributed this to gaining control over her 'context'. Clarification of 'context' indicated that Lucy felt she previously had no choice over her location, which deprived her of choice in friendship. The lack of autonomy she experienced was linked to being unable to control her context, which was directly related to her friendship experience. In Lucy's case she 'pretended' to be someone she was not in order to facilitate friendships (see p. 64 for further discussion of this finding) and gaining control over her context allowed her to stop pretending and develop more satisfying relationships.

**Researcher:** *So, so your-you felt like your maybe pretending to be somebody that you weren't. An-And espec- especially in your friendships. Do you think that changed then when you came back to the UK?*

**Lucy:** *I think it changed as I got older and got more confident ... as I had more control over my context. So I could cha-choose things bits at a time.*

**Researcher:** *Mmm. So how did you get control over your context then?*

**Lucy:** *By choosing, uh, where I wanted to be and probably by choosing my friends and by ... having friends who are more like me. Lucy: p. 11, L. 218-225*

In the following excerpts John revealed how his friends had to behave when they were together because the consequences for misbehaving would have an impact their parent's job. John, like most TCKs, seemed acutely aware that his own actions and those of his friends affect the family's tenure in the overseas location. By emphasising his voice while saying 'actually really important' he indicated a keen awareness of this predicament. Frequently, the (mis)behaviour of children in TCK families can result in families being sent 'home' or being reprimanded by the sponsoring organisation (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). John described the consequences of this when one of his 'friends' was caught setting fire to a signal post.

*And in the Forces [not getting caught misbehaving is] actually really important, because, like if your kid gets caught doing something he shouldn't, then it goes back on your Dad. Right? John: p. 13, L. 290-293*

*Well, so not only did he get a telling off by the fire brigade, but his Dad was actually marched in and do you know, to see the, you know, the command- the cap- the commander of the Camp basically. Who basically gave his dad a right bollocking and so then of course that came back to him, right? John: p. 14, L. 313-319*

Dora also addressed this more generally. The added responsibility for the TCK places an additional burden on the TCK friendship. They are aware that their behaviours can have a direct affect on the family and they must censor themselves accordingly, thus loosing some of their autonomy. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) refer to this as a 'system identity' (p.23), where TCKs are more aware than their non-TCK peers of representing something greater than themselves, such as their sponsoring organization. The participants mentioned this affecting their friendships and they had to censor their behaviour accordingly.

*[ ] in the army if your family do something err which proves err illegal or counter to what the army want then you lose all of your erm possibilities of promotion and often you are sent back to England so now I understand why we all had to behave ourselves, be friendly with the colonel who you know usually a pain in the ne- backside (laughs)*  
Dora: p.16, L.459-466

Finally, Nancy spent some time toward the end of our interview considering how her parents had influenced her friendships. She began with a question, 'if', then reconsidered 'how much' before concluding that her parents unique childhoods had endowed them with 'baggage', which influenced the topography of Nancy's own childhood and thus affected her friendships. Her inquisitive rhetoric demonstrated an awareness of influences beyond her control that prejudiced her own style of relating to peers. This highlighted the concept of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1988) as an important feature to consider in TCK relationships. One cannot determine the attachment style of ones parents or how they influence one in childhood. This demonstrated another way in which TCKs experienced lack of control over external forces leaving them feeling as though they lacked autonomy and which ultimately affected the friendship experience.

**Researcher:** *Is there anything I didn't ask you about that you feel is particularly relevant to your experience of friendship?*

**Nancy:** *Um ... I don't know if one's parents, how much one's parents have an influence on on the relationships that we make as we're older, um.* Nancy: p. 48, L. 1394-1396

**Nancy:** *Um, but of course she [Mum] had all of that baggage, well they both [parents] came with a reasonable amount of baggage and I think they both tried to give us, you know, the best childhood that, that, you know, the childhood that they didn't have. \_*  
Nancy: p. 49, L. 1448-1452

Later on in the transcript.

**Nancy:** *[ ] going back to my parents I, I'm not sure they were very good ... role models when it came to having friends*

**Researcher:** *mmm.*

*Nancy: Because we didn't have loads of friends who'd come around at the weekends and you know we had dad's work colleagues, well maybe the odd neighbour who we were friendly with, um. Nancy: p. 52, L. 1513-1521*

### **5.1.2 Lack of understanding between ATCKs and non-TCKs**

This theme reveals that the participants encountered a lack of understanding or empathy from non-TCKs, as well as experiencing their own lack of understanding of non-TCKs. The lack of empathy from others and the lack of understanding about others created misunderstandings between TCKs and their non-TCK peers, which impeded the development and maintenance of friendship.

Ultimately it seemed both members of a friendship dyad were impeded by a lack of knowledge about one another's lifestyles. While sponsoring organisations do much to prepare adults for overseas assignments (e.g. Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2012), little is done to facilitate transitions for the children (Bell, 1996). This is also true when the TCKs (re)enter the home country (Gaw, 2007), despite some evidence for the effectiveness of providing preparation for the transition (Davis, Headley, Bazemore, Cervo, Sickinger, Windham and Rehfuss, 2010).

Ellen described that she had difficulty keeping in touch with her friends in the UK because they did not understand her overseas lifestyle. Within her narrative there was an inability to explain herself to others who had not experienced a similar lifestyle. Indeed, her description to me lacked some clarity. She kept interrupting her monologue and failed to finish sentences of thought, which caused me to guess some of her meaning during the data analysis. I wondered if she found it difficult to understand how her own lifestyle compared with that of her peers. Indeed, later on Ellen suggests the things that she had in 'common' with her friends disappeared (line 445-449 below). Non-TCKs could not understand Ellen, but also Ellen could not fully grasp how she might be different from others. Perhaps there was a mutual lack of understanding given that the TCK lifestyles are so 'different' to non-TCK backgrounds. Without common lifestyles it seemed a challenge for her to explain her own background to another person, and without a clear explanation it was difficult for others to understand her. This had the unfortunate consequence of her losing friendships.

*Ellen: [ ] keeping in touch with people in the UK after I'd left was really difficult because I'd come back to the UK and they wouldn't understand or even have a sense of, it's really difficult to explain your life when you move to Hong Kong and people don't have the money to come and visit you or, it's really hard to explain the way you live and*



*I think that certainly made it difficult to maintain friendships that I'd had before I moved to Hong Kong, definitely. Ellen: p. 15, L. 404-412.*

***Ellen:** we kind of lost the things in common that we used to have in common. Um, and it was more [ ] difficult to keep in contact Ellen: p. 16, L. 445-449.*

Dora also recounted how the experience of explaining her lifestyle to a non-TCK peer created problems between them and ended the friendship. Dora believed a non-TCK peer thought she was 'bragging' when she was, on the contrary, sharing her own personal experience and trying to engage in a conversation with a non-TCK peer. Dora withdrew from the friendship in the belief that her peer thought she was showing off or 'bragging'. Dora laughed at the end of this story that suggested how nonsensical this idea was to her.

***Dora:** Because the local English teacher doesn't want to know [about your past], you know, they think that you are bragging if you say have you ever been to Bali, it's such a lovely place? You know, they say, I'm not talking to you about that, I've only been to Southampton, you know (laughs). Dora: p. 6, L. 144-149*

Much in the same way that Ellen could not understand her UK peers given the differences in lifestyle, John also could not understand his non-TCK peers for reasons of life-style choices. In the following excerpt John described trying to explain his lifestyle choices to his non-TCK peers. He described non-TCKs as 'these people', which established them as an out-group and set them up as 'different' from him, thus perhaps defying understanding; by referring to them in this way they seemed alien, ambiguous, and confusing. In turn, these 'different' people lacked an understanding of him. They thought him 'brave', but he was certain this was not the case, that he was 'normal'. He was both unable to convey this to them and to understand why they might have such a view of him as anything other than 'just' doing something 'normal'.

***John:** I think it's almost that you expect that people will [travel] and sometimes when you are talking to these, do you know, talking to these pe- people and they're like 'Oh you're so brave going to such and such' and it's like, well, not really. It's, you know that to me is just the norm, it's what you do. John: p. 28, L. 610-618*

Nancy described difficulty trying to understand group friendships in the UK. In reviewing this transcript I had a sense that Nancy's world had collapsed around her. She had gone from the 'big'

world of Australia to a 'little' world, which she didn't 'get'. This lack of comprehension had the effect of excluding her from friendships with others, making her world seem much smaller and alien to her.

*Nancy: [ ] back in the UK, you had to fit into a little box. You had to, you had to fit into a little group and you couldn't, you know, you had your best friend and you had your little group of cronies, and you didn't then particularly talk to anyone outside that group unless you had to. Um, you had to have your little group and you couldn't be, it wasn't, it almost seems like, it wasn't acceptable to be in more than one group and I didn't get that because I'd always been part of a bigger picture. Nancy: p. 43, L. 1258-1269*

Throughout several of these accounts, and many not included here (review CD for full transcripts), participants used the phrase 'you know' when describing their experiences. This had the effect of including me in their stories and my colluding with their views. It created shorthand for their frustration with trying to explain themselves, and often I found myself failing to ask for further clarification during the interview. I felt that I did in fact 'know' what they were talking about. There was a sense that if they were trying to explain themselves to another ATCK or TCK that peer would 'know' what they were trying to convey. This shared understanding between the participants and myself was that these misunderstandings between TCKs and non-TCKs were inevitable due to our backgrounds. In this way a lack of understanding came not only from non-TCK, but also from us as TCKs. TCKs couldn't seem to understand the non-TCKs background and vice versa, this had the effect of limiting friendships or impeding the progress between TCKs and non-TCKs. It also seemed to create an in-group and an out-group. You were 'in' if you were a TCK and 'out' if you were not. This caused me to think about how participants were articulating their group memberships and I kept hearing the words 'English', 'British' and Brit in the transcripts. I wanted to find evidence of their membership among TCKs, but this was not forthcoming, instead I thought more about friendship as confirmation of an individual's worldview and similarity theory in the formation of this worldview. This led to the development of the second Super-ordinate theme, 'multiple identities in response to friendship' introduced on page 60. First though I will articulate another challenge for ATCKs in the formation and maintenance of friendship, which also caused me to think of similarity theory.

### 5.1.3. Negative beliefs about people from the UK: The ‘English/British’.

All participants described difficulties with ‘British-ness’, or ‘English-ness’ during their interviews. Both terms were used interchangeably. The concept of being English or British, which has been defined in opposition to multicultural (Mann, 2011), was problematic for TCKs in forming and maintaining friendships. TCKs are typically cultural chameleons (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001) and as such use their identities flexibly to navigate multicultural contexts. To come up against someone who cannot or does not do this appears problematic to the formation of friendship. Within this group of ATCKs encountering ‘Englishness’ seemed to create a real sense of us, the ‘TCK’ and ‘them’, the British/English. This grouping inhibited friendships between ATCKs and non-ATCKs from the UK, and is echoed in the previous theme ‘lack of understanding’. Participants struggled to understand and accept people from the UK. This is reflected in other work, which suggests TCKs have difficulty relating to their own ‘ethnic’ groups (Cottrell & Useem, 1993). The participants were all quite negative about people from the UK and in some cases negative about being from the UK themselves. Interestingly, they typically ascribed stereotypes to describe the English people they encountered. This is discussed further within the examples given.

Jake described one of his friends as ‘very typically English’. The use of the word ‘typical’ suggested that Jake had preconceived notions of what it meant to be ‘English’. He began to describe this, but cut himself off, perhaps because he could not articulate what Englishness was or because he wanted to censor his negativity about what Englishness was. He did, however, provide an example of what a process of befriending an English person might be like, which seemed to imply negative attitudes toward Englishness none-the-less. Jake related that English people were ‘easy’ to chat to and have ‘initial conversations’ with. Both terms seem quite superficial and Jake said it was hard to get it past that ‘level’. He implied that the ‘level’ of friendship between himself and a ‘typical’ English person might be like a collegial or business-type relationship. This suggested that his relationships with English people lack any significant intimacy or depth, that they are not ‘real’ friendships, suggesting that for Jake friendship must be more than business-like, but that this is difficult with ‘typically English’ people. He does offer some hope for the listener though when he clarifies that a ‘real friendship’ was achieved after some years with a ‘typically English’ person. This suggests that perhaps friendship between non-TCKs and TCKs may take longer to establish, but can be achieved.

***Jake:** So, I think English people in general tend to be quite, not, they can be quite, um, er, they’re not, umm, not friendly. Jake: p. 12, l. 167-169.*

**Jake:** *Yes. 'cause she was very typically English. So English people aren't... you can get, it's quite easy to chat to and to, or to go for a drink in the pub and to have that initial conversations, but getting it beyond that level of uhh, it just being a colleague, that's very typical of the work scenarios as well, to real friendship it took a number of years actually before we grew past that. Jake: p. 11, l. 156-163*

From Jake's narrative, it appeared that a great deal of effort and time had to be invested befriending someone from the UK. The majority of TCK are unused to doing this. Their experience of high mobility engenders a sense that if a relationship does not move forward quickly, it may not have time to develop, thus the majority of friendships in the overseas locations are formed quickly (Edwards- Wertsch, 2011). When this is not the case TCKs may characterise a person as 'shallow' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Jake demonstrated this aptitude by judging his friendship with English peers to be superficial, which, arguably, is another word for shallow. Interestingly though he did not characterise the person, but the friendship and explained this as being the result of some typical English trait. In doing this he preserved an image of himself as fully capable of making friends. This might be a useful coping strategy for dealing with the already difficult situation of relocating, or being without a supportive friendship network. This stereotyping and negative attitude towards people from the UK was evident throughout all the interviews.

Stereotyping occurs when we are unable or unwilling to obtain all of the information we need to make a fair judgment about people or situations. In the absence of the so-called 'total picture,' stereotyping allows us to fill in the missing pieces of information. This 'English' stereotype may be useful given the 'lack of understanding' TCKs experience when they encounter non-TCKs from the UK. However, it presents a significant challenge for TCKs in forming friendships with English people. If TCKs perceive English people as embodying certain negative traits, or stereotypes, they may be excused for avoiding friendships with English people. Daniel emphasised this point as he actively avoided English people. Daniel found 'English-ness' such a challenge to forming relationships that he made a concerted effort to avoid English peers, as did Dora.

**Daniel:** *I certainly find and seek out the non-English in any group and prefer to talk with them. I find them more interesting, I find them easier to strike a conversation and keep a conversation going. Daniel: p. 21, L. 424-428*

***Dora:*** *We wouldn't join the British crowd because we didn't want to err you know be stuck with the British crowd really. Dora, p. 8, L. 210-212*

Despite encountering language barriers in his relationships with non-English people Daniel was more at ease with the non-English than the 'natives', or the English. His word 'native' was particularly provocative as it conveyed an impression of violent or dangerous people, or at least unfriendly and incomprehensible. Historically British colonials subjugated 'natives'. Daniel's father, as a member of the armed forces, would have been charged with such a responsibility while overseas. Daniel may have used the word 'native' subversively, to separate himself from the stereotype of old colonial rule.

In doing so he identified himself in the same way the colonials may have, that is suffering the inadequacies of indigenous people; in this case the indigenous people Daniel must 'suffer' are in fact the 'English.' In a sense Daniel must suffer the same unfair treatment from his English peers, as an indigenous population would have during Colonial occupation. It is an amusing turn of phrase but further demonstrates a negative attitude toward Englishness, which is problematic to the formation of friendship with English peers. In addition by denying a national identity, much like the TCKs adolescents in Lam and Selmer (2004), Daniel considers himself international.

***Daniel:*** *I still find it much easier to deal with the non-English than the English. And I do think it's... you often find [ ] that language barriers mean that it's hard to be deep in conversation, you can't express deep meanings. But they are much easier to have conversations than with the natives, the English. Daniel: p. 15, L. 313-319*

Dora reported questioning her family's decision to return to the UK, because of the inability of 'Brits' to focus on 'anything happy'. According to her a characteristic of 'British-ness' is 'moaning' and 'groaning', and despite residing in the UK for a number of years the negativity she perceived was 'still' present. This suggested Dora had not been able to (re)integrate fully with the British culture and saw herself as separate from it. Her inability to identify with the 'Brits' around her made it difficult for her to form friendships with them.

***Dora:*** *I thought why have we come back here? There were queues of people behind me moaning and groaning, like only the Brits can do. I found the news on the television very negative and it still is. It's, there's never a day when they can have a good day on*

*the news you know, it's always got to be somebody's died or they're fighting or, you know, they can't focus on anything happy. Dora: p. 27, L789-797.*

Unlike the others, Lucy also experienced other people stereotyping her as a person from the UK. Lucy articulated that her overseas peers were surprised that she was not a 'typical white woman'. The image of a 'white person' in Singapore might be informed by the former British colonial rule of Singapore. British colonials might be 'closed down' or not enjoy different cultures and so on, and are justifiably avoided, much as Lucy's peers avoided befriending her. Stereotypes become a problem when they are inaccurate, especially when those inaccuracies are negative and hostile. Subsequently, Lucy had to work hard to explain herself independently from those characteristics in order to establish friendships with others.

***Lucy:** A typical white middle class woman [ ]. Who might be a little more closed down, worried by change and culture, uh, more anxious about difference I suppose and less ... understanding of ... I suppose doesn't enjoy different culture, foods, experiences. Lucy: p. 16, L. 257-261*

#### **5.1.4 Keeping in touch with others as a challenge to maintaining friendship.**

Given their mobile lifestyles it seems natural that ATCKs would experience some difficulty maintaining friendships. This theme addresses how all of the participants reported challenges in keeping in touch with their friends and how they attempted to manage this.

Ellen's story of trying to keep in touch with her friends by sitting next to the fax machine showed a young woman determined to maintain her friendships with others, despite the challenges of doing so (time differences, cost, and so on). For Ellen keeping in touch was difficult but necessary and she displayed flexibility in how this was achieved.

*Um, well it [maintaining friendships] was...it was difficult, it was more difficult to keep in touch then [10/15 years ago] so this is one thing I mentioned...my friends that I'd made in Hong Kong I'm still friends with I'm still in regular contact with and Facebook and e-mail. When I first moved to Hong Kong there wasn't Facebook I don't think I even had a computer at home for a while um and I used to fax messages to my friend L. that I used to hang out with we used to like make a time that we'd sit next to our fax machines and fax, fax the paper through so (laughs). Ellen: p. 16, L. 420-433*

Daniel on the other hand reported that he did not need to keep in regular contact with others to feel that he maintained the physical distance between himself and his friend. He reported that despite not seeing his friends for 13 years, he would still consider them to be friends. For Daniel emotional connectedness with his friend was possible without physical contact.

**Daniel:** *People I, some of the people I count as my friends who I haven't seen for 13 years, are the ones in HK who I haven't seen for 13 years. Daniel: p. 27, L. 549-552*

Jake reported how keeping in touch was a challenge and that he lost contact with a friend for a number of years. The term 'desperately tried' evoked a sense of despair and urgency with trying to maintain the relationship. The term implores the listener to question how Jake was getting on with forming new friendships. Perhaps given the desperation one can infer not well. In reviewing the remainder of Jake's transcript the evidence suggests that he did have a difficult time forming friendships when he returned to the UK. (See transcript for Jake, p. 27, L. 453-464 on CD). However, Jake reported that he was able to reconnect when his friend visited the UK. In Jake's case physical togetherness was important to maintain the friendship. However, he reports two conflicting views of this; that it was 'wonderful' and 'good' but also that it was 'weird'. It seems despite his best efforts to keep in touch the friendship did not survive the physical distance.

**Jake:** *[ ] this guy D, ended up in the states and I lost touch with him for years, and I desperately tried to get in touch with him, and then eventually we did manage to get in touch and he came here, he came back to visit us in the UK, and that was wonderful. It was really good meeting up. He had changed totally; it was kind of weird seeing him again. Jake: p. 38, L. 686-693*

John also seemed to have difficulty keeping in touch with his peers. He reported trying to use Facebook to maintain his friendships. While this resource facilitates sharing information about what his friends are 'doing' he felt they were not really communicating. There is something lacking with the process of Facebooking with friends the friendship is not maintained.

**John:** *I kept in contact, I've not really kept in contact with, with them. Some of them have contacted me since, you know on Facebook, and stuff like that.*

**Researcher:** *Umm.*

*John: But, we've talked, like when we've done the initial contact we've talked, but then we haven't maintained that. It's like we're friends and we see what each other is doing, but we don't really, we're not really in communication with each other. John: p. 23, L. 517-526*

As TCKs experience constant change and frequently exhibit a need to be mobile (Useem et al, 1993) most TCK relationships are temporary (Cockburn, 2002). If the TCK is unable to maintain or develop relationships with others the TCK may be unable to protect themselves against future losses (Cockburn, 2002). Change demands that we assume new strategies for coping and communicating. The participants in this study demonstrated flexibility. By maintaining friendships with their peers in a variety of ways (Facebook, email, fax, telephone, infrequent visits) they maintained their social support network. If they were unable to do this, as many of them suggest, they may encounter further challenges. A non-TCK could also struggle to keep in touch with peers that relocate, but the majority of social support will be resident close by, whereas the TCKs social support may be residing internationally, at which point technology becomes extremely important.

## **5.2 Multiple identities in response to friendship**

This theme is concerned with the flexibility of identity that participants demonstrated in their narratives of friendship. Participants engaged in multiple identities in order to facilitate friendships or cope with the absence of them. In many cases this was articulated as a journey with some of the participants describing a process of 'faking it to fit in', becoming 'independent' from others and eventually coming to discover a 'shared' version of themselves within friendships. In other cases it was falling in an out of various identities with different people, or groups to facilitate friendships. Ultimately, the goal was to find acceptance for ones self within the friendship. Whether one found acceptance by 'faking it to fit in', 'being independent', or 'sharing' an identity was a process of discovery within the friendship itself. As Jake so aptly states;

*You view yourself differently in different circles of friends. So it depends on what the scenario is. Uhh, with. So (laugh/sigh) with the mates that, that, I've known since College and Uni, it's a very different Jake (smiling) than, than the Jake from work or home or the mates, you know, or the social mates we make around here. So in different scenarios it's different views. In some of them, it will be the dependable trustable Jake,*



*in some of them it will be the guy who takes the piss. I mean it really depends. Jake: p. 17, L. 267-277*

A symbolic interactionist view of identity argues that social identity emerges from social interactions within context and thus an individual's behaviour can vary between groups. Mead (1934) proposed that self-concepts are formed and regulated by situationally adopting others' perspectives on the self. The phenomenological approach taken in this study argues that 'the self' is a 'series of relationally dependent selves, each of which arises and interacts with its environment according to the circumstances that have arisen and whose function is to interpret and respond to the current impact provoked by the presence of others' (Spinelli, 2005, p.80). Jake articulates this well in the above passage. Jake took on a different role depending on the 'scenario', which influences his sense of self. Because individuals are members of any number of social relationships, self-understanding is not only fluid but also context-appropriate, corresponding pragmatically to the social expectations relevant to the given situation. If Jake is expected to be 'dependable' and 'trustable' in the context of a particular relationship his understanding of himself will be so influenced.

The symbolic interactionist approach invites us to appreciate that there are as many personal identities as there are friendship dyads and that there are as many social identities as there are groups that we feel we belong to. In this way identity is not a fixed reality, but a fluid and evolving thing context dependent. The TCKs identity is complex and multifaceted; depending on the context the TCK will feel 'different', 'fake it to fit in', be 'independent' or 'share' and identity with others, especially other TCK. 'From the phenomenological standpoint we realize that since the self-construct is the emergent interpretative structure that construes meaning from the chaos of experience, it is inherently impermanent over time, while still appearing to be stable at any given time' (Spinelli, 2005, p. 89). The 'I' is continually being reinterpreted according to intentional variables, such as noticing how things have changed around us, avoiding loneliness, breaking away from relationships, or finding acceptance within a certain group. This is clarified in the following subordinate themes.

### **5.2.1 Feeling 'different' from others**

This subordinate theme appears first in relation to the Superordinate theme 'Multiple Identities in response to friendship' as it was one I recognised right away in all the transcripts and reflected the work of other TCK writers and researchers (e.g., Useem, 1993). All of the participants described

feeling ‘different’ from others in their social groups, both abroad and in the UK. Lucy articulated this most succinctly in the following expert, where she described returning to the UK and forming friendships with people who were ‘much more like’ her. When I asked Lucy what she meant by this she told me she had more in common with people who were ‘different’. Thus promoting the notion that TCKs feel ‘different’ from those around them (Useem, 1993), and extending it to a UK population of TCKs

*Lucy: [ ] when I came back to UK I went to University at sort of 18 ... um and I think yeah my friendships were very different because I was finding people who were much more like me who has similar ideas but I think and, tha- that's, that's progressed over time so even discovering other people who've had similar experiences in terms of moving that's been a you know great bonus, joy. Mmm.*

*Researcher: Wh-what do you mean when you say 'like me'? S- meeting people who were more like me.*

*Lucy: Umm, who had, who maybe felt a bit different. So square pegs in round holes.*

*Lucy: p. 12, L. 338-249*

What I became interested in was the question of how the ATCKs felt they were different from their peers? What made them think they were different? This seemed a natural extension of the claims of other TCK writers who had not articulated ‘how’ TCKs felt different from their peers. I utilised the IPA technique of numeration to review the data with this question in mind (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Each time I noticed a context for how the participants experienced being different I recorded it in my notes, these were eventually pared down to represent the most common contexts in which the participants experienced being ‘different’

For Nancy, she felt she was ‘different’ from her peers because the educational systems in which she studied were very different between countries, this highlighted differences between herself and her peers.

*I do remember it being, quite ... initially a little bit difficult to settle in and make friends because of course I probably came in part way through a school year. Um, and it was very d-...-different from the school I had been to before and also um ... I'd been back in*

*the UK for a year because before that we'd spent about 18 months in Saudi, so I changed schools quite a lot up to that point. Nancy: p. 1, L, 12-21*

Lucy also reflected that she experienced feeling 'different' by narrating her experience of culturally diverse friendships. She noticed that she was more likely to find companionship with people from 'different' parts of the world instead of one cultural context. This reflects the finding that TCKs are culturally eclectic and that they adapt their identities in the context of multiple cultural experiences (Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Straffon, 2003). When parts of the TCK identity are being denied in the context of a dominant culture it makes sense that they would seek friendships with other cultures who may also be adapting to a dominant culture.

*I do have a lot of friends who were from all kinds of different parts of the world. Um, and compared to somebody who hasn't had my same sort of experiences ... it's different, so tha-that's quite interesting just to reflect on. I mean if I look round the room and think 'oh I've got a friend who's from Asia, US, Caribbean' I haven't consciously gone out of my way to do that I just end up usually or if I go into a room I usually end up on a table of 'others' as opposed to the table that all looks like me. Lucy: p. 13, L, 210-280*

Alli also mentioned feeling different when she described the different cultural context of her own childhood in HK and that of her children in the UK.

*[ ] I really allow my child to get mucky, to play in nature, to do all the things that I think that actually are more about being a child. I think you get forced to grow up very quickly [in Hong Kong], to um learn about people and friendship and relationships very quickly [ ] Alli: p. 7, L, 167-172*

Feeling 'perpetually out of step', or 'marginalised' in their relationships is not uncommon for TCKs (McCaig, 1994). For Ellen this feeling was due to lack of social similarities between herself and her non-TCK peers.

*[ ] we kind of lost the things in common that we used to have in common. Um, and it was more diffic- yea so technology made it difficult to keep in contact and because her social life consisted of I guess from maybe fifteen sixteen you know hanging out with school friends meeting boys, going on dates, I didn't have anything, I was, anything like*

*that um the things that I had in common with my friends here, was to go and play sports or go out to dinner or go to the cinema, and it's just different, different things that you do socially made it differe-difficult to stay in contact. Ellen, p.16, L. 445-459*

A final difference between the participants in this study and their peers was the TCK travelling background, which made them 'different' from others. Dora reported this when she told me about a discussion between herself and a group of people on a training course. She articulated that the only person with whom she could converse had also travelled. The people who had not travelled were 'just different' making Dora 'different' by default.

*the only person in the room who travelled as a child was a girl whose father was a diplomat in Geneva and so she'd grown up in Geneva and within seconds we were deeply in conversation about various things, whereas the rest of them said you know fascinated to listened to, we've got nothing to add to it you know. They all feel it's something special and that it can't be talked about and I said well actually, it can be talked about between everybody because you've all had various experiences too, it's just different. Dora, p 9, L. 258-268*

### **5.2.2 'Faking' it to fit in with others**

All of the participants described a way of making or maintaining friends that was congruent within their social context, but incongruent with how they saw themselves outside of this context. They viewed themselves as having to pretend to be something in order to find acceptance within a particular peer group. That is they acted out certain behaviours acceptable to the group, which then defined their identity. ATCKs performed this identity to achieve belonging within a peer group and avoid the possible consequences of loneliness. This theme appeared in both the overseas setting and when describing friendship formation in the UK. It seemed to appear in childhood, but become a useful strategy for achieving friendship even in adulthood.

John most clearly demonstrated how his identity was shaped by the desire to make or maintain friendships and avoid the possibility of loneliness. He described himself as an 'entertainer', someone who is by definition acting for others. His use of the term 'get people on board' suggested that his entertaining identity functioned to attract others to him quickly so he could enjoy their company for a time. TCKs often move through the layers of friendship quickly (Edwards- Wertsch, 2011). By entertaining others John moved through the layers of social penetration and established

friendships in record time, thus avoiding loneliness. Being a TCK forced John to adopt an identity that may not have otherwise arisen in order to achieve friendships. He used the present tense to describe himself as an entertainer, which suggested that his false self was still a useful strategy for making and maintaining friendships. Unlike Lucy and Alli (described next), John felt as though he had to project something false to make or maintain friendships. This strategy was a lasting legacy of being a TCK for John informs his sense of self into adulthood.

*I think along the way, I have lost contact with people as well. And it, it's distressing, you know, I think, it does have an impact on the way you see people and the way you run your life. I think it makes me, I feel like I have to be an entertainer all the time. You know, like I've got to try and entertain people. You know, cause, snap everything in (snaps his fingers) and try and make, you know, get people on board and make and so, yeah, I think it did shape in a lot of ways who I am and the way I am and the way I do things. John, p. 7, L. 156-167*

Lucy described how being a TCK required her to pretend to be something that she was not in her childhood friendships. In order to fit in and be a part of relationships she had to 'put down' her academic skill, or deny a part of her self. This had the consequence that Lucy's friendships were not 'genuine' but 'other'. She had to maintain false behaviours, which caused her to hold a false sense of self in order to facilitate friendships. Lucy indicated that this was an uncomfortable alliance as she was 'always scared' that her friends would realise she was actually different from how she portrayed herself.

*So it was kind of like 50 kids, there might be 3 or 4 of us who were doing 'O' or 'A' levels the rest were doing business studies. And in order to keep in with the 'in-crowd' you had to kind of, um, put down almost your academic skills. Lucy: p. 9, L. 180-185*

*I was always scared of being discovered ... so I had to ... I suppose, yeah, I think that whole theme of trying to be something that other people wanted me to be. I think that's what I was doing so I think that's how it affected my friendships so often friendships might not be that genuine. Lucy: p. 10, L. 201-207*

Alli also reported acting a certain way in the context of her group friendships that was not congruent with her self-concept outside of this group. She described having to 'put up a front', which generated images in my mind of a shop window with bright colours enticing people in. The

fact that she was 'so used to' it, suggested that she was practiced at this pretext and that it was a default position for making or maintaining friendships. Additionally, Alli used the term 'cool gang' which reminded me of painful adolescents desperate to be part of something. Like most other TCKs, Alli was aware of the consequences of not being part of something. The painful loneliness that comes with losing friendships made her determined to hold onto friendships that were less than satisfactory. Thus Alli pretended to be 'cool' in order to fit in, because the alternative would have been loneliness. This pretext may be present among other non-TCK adolescent, but I would argue it is more common among TCKs as the community of peers from which to select friends is much smaller. TCK are faced with two choices fake it to fit in or be alone. For non-TCKs there is often a third option- find another group of peers to form friendships with. Fortunately Alli articulated that putting up the front 'was' who she was, which suggested that she had since found a group in which her sense of self was more congruent, where she did not have to fake any part of herself in order to fit in. This theme is further articulated in the latter subordinate theme 'A shared identity with others'

*Alli: Yeah, so, the thing is I was so used to having to put up a front about who I was, and um*

*Researcher: Can you give me an example of that?*

*Alli: (sigh). I think in Hong Kong you were either cool or you weren't, you were chic or geek, you know, and um, I was part of the cool gang and with it came the fact that you had to be tough, you had to, you know, you had to be cool, you know, otherwise you weren't and there was quite a clear divide I think. Alli: p. 16, L. 386-395*

In the final excerpt Daniel described his upbringing as like the 'Truman Show'. This is a movie where the central character was duped into living in a fictional TV world. By making this comparison Daniel suggested that everyone around him was fake and himself by default having to live the same unreal life in order to fit in with those around him. He used the past tense to describe his situation, which suggested that he had since moved on from this style of relating and like Alli had relationships in which he could explore a different sense of himself, one that was not false. This is further evidenced in the theme 'being independent' or 'a shared identity' where ATCKs reported relationships where their sense of self was not faked.

**Daniel:** *You can imagine that the Army travelling life is actually very regimented. [ ]. It was all very organised in that sense. Uhh, it was also very, ummm, it was also, as I say, very trouble free. [ ], everyone is in the same situation. [ ]. There were problems, [ ]. But the Army was very brutal, if parents had problems [ ] they were sent back to England. So it sounds like, what was that movie? There was that movie with Jim Carey where he lived in a bubble.*

**Researcher:** *Oh, the Truman Show!*

**Daniel:** *Yeah! It sounds a bit like that. Daniel, p. 20, L. 384-408*

### 5.2.3 Being ‘independent’ from others

This theme appeared in contrast to the theme ‘faking it to fit in with others’. When adopting an ‘independent’ identity the ATCKs seemed unconcerned about fitting in, or belonging to a specific group, they were instead fairly resolute in their independence from others.

In the first extract Ellen recounted her departure from Hong Kong. Her narrative was staccato, clipped, and determined; it functioned to separate her from her peers. This style of speaking conveyed to me her sense of independence from others. She also said that she was ‘opposite’ to those around her, which suggested that her sense of self was not dependent on fitting in with the group. It suggested that she had reached a point where she was confident, or perhaps forced to assert herself and break from the friendships with her peer group. TCKs often must terminate friendships in order to relocate. Even with the best intentions these friendships dwindle. I argue through this theme that the ‘independent’ self functions as a self-concept which allows the TCK to comfortably break with a friendship and make the next transition with confidence.

*Maybe a week after I finished school, after I finished my A-levels, I said, right, I’m going, goodbye everyone. I’m off to the UK, I’m going to get two months of work experience, I’m going to live with my Granddad for a bit and then I’m going to start Uni and that’s what I did. Um, and kind of left everyone, a lot of people wanted to hang around as long as they could in the summer before they went onto university but I was the opposite just raring to go and earn some money and come back to the UK. Ellen: p. 21, L. 601-613*

In the next excerpt Jake also demonstrated his independence from others. Jake expected to fit in with a particular social group when he returned to the UK. However, this was not the case as Jake realised how different he was from others. He reported that his peers were ‘closeted’ and ‘spoiled’ which suggested they might have been looked after, whereas Jake considered himself to be less so and thus unable to relate to the group. Werkman, et al, (1981) found TCK adolescents from the USA cope with the challenge of transition by becoming more inner-directed and less reliant on others. Huff (2001) also suggested that TCKs are more independent than non-TCK, while other researchers argue they are more socially detached (Useem, 1993). Jake exemplified this when he broke from his peer group, and thus asserted his independence.

***Jake:** Theoretically I should have been able to just slide into that and use that as a support network. But it just didn't work. Ahhh.*

***Researcher:** Why do you think it didn't work?*

***Jake:** Why I, why I, think partly, I think partly because ahhh, the vast majority of, of, of, that community had grown up in that closeted environment that I just described and I hadn't or, and certainly wasn't and wasn't interested in it. So I thought they were just a bunch of spoiled Jewish brats (laughs). And I was just not interested in spending time with them. And that, that, that just didn't work for us. Jake, p. 27, L. 453-464*

Contrary to Jake, Nancy related that she had no expectation of fitting in with her peers. In her case she suggested that she had always been independent and avoided conforming. Her identity as someone who was comfortably different from her peers was accepted in Australia, and a useful strategy for coping with being ‘different’. Nancy only realised she had to assert herself independently when she returned to the UK. This independence freed Nancy from having to conform but also functioned to explain why she struggled to form friendships. Research has found that TCKs from the USA regard their greatest strengths as intrapersonal rather than interpersonal (Werkman, et al, 1981). Other research has suggested that while TCKs may feel less secure in contemplating relationships with others they cope with the challenge of transition by becoming more independent and less reliant on others (Huff, 2001) or by becoming socially detached (Useem, 1993).

*I didn't want to dress that way, I wanted to dress my way, and perhaps it was that I was a little bit resistant to, fitting into. I don't think I'd ever felt in Australia that I'd had to*



*conform to a particular way of doing things, and in the UK, I definitely felt that I had to conform to a particular behaviour or type. And I didn't agree with that. Nancy: p. 21, L. 720-727.*

Lucy described how she established her independence by finding acceptance for being 'different' in a group of people equally as 'different'. In the early days of returning to the UK she established herself as part of a group traditionally on the fringes of social groups, the 'mavericks'. Such people are used to taking risks by asserting their independence, and perhaps being socially isolated. By being a member of this group Lucy asserted her intrapersonal skills and coped with the transition and lack of friendship by establishing similarity with others who were perhaps also not fitting in with a group. TCKs report feeling less secure in contemplating relationships with others and cope with the challenge of transition by becoming more independent and less reliant on others (Huff, 2001) or by becoming socially detached (Useem, 1993).

As she matured Lucy continued to find acceptance from people who did not quite fit in, who were 'others'. Being independent from the mainstream seemed to have become a natural instinct as Lucy described it as happening unconsciously. She also seemed to be saying that she felt more comfortable with people who were similarly independent. This finding is reflexive of other TCK work that suggests TCKs regard their greatest strengths as intrapersonal rather than interpersonal (Werkman, et al, 1981).

**Lucy:** *I usually find the person th-that's ... I think in the early days I think it was the sort of the eccentric types the mavericks.*

**Researcher:** *Mmm. [ ] What do you mean by [ ] eccentric or maverick?*

**Lucy:** *Who kind of stood out, who ... might be taking drugs or doing wacky things. As I've got older I think ... they're usually people with strong ... strong views or who-who've been in a different culture so ... um, I do have a lot of friends who were from all kinds of different parts of the world. Um, and compared to somebody who hasn't had my same sort of experiences ... it's different, [ ]. I mean if I look round the room and think 'oh I've got a friend who's from Asia, US, Caribbean' I haven't consciously gone out of my way to do that I just end up usually or if I go into a room I usually end up on a table of 'others' as opposed to the table that all looks like me. Lucy: p. 13, L. 261-280*

#### 5.2.4 A 'shared' identity with others

The identity of the participants also varied in terms of their understanding of a 'shared' membership with a certain group. Friendship functioned to validate the ATCKs sense of identity by (re)creating a 'shared' history with others. The members of a TCK friendship may not have known each other in the past, but they made assumptions about one another based on what they thought they knew about one another's past. These assumptions created a 'shared' history that helped the two people identify with one another thus creating a 'shared identity' with which they found belonging. TCKs often find a sense of belonging in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p 19). I took this to mean TCKs would most commonly report finding friendships with other TCKs, as other research suggests (Schaetti, 2000). I was however pleasantly surprised to find that TCKs could find 'similarity' with other diverse groups. I begin with the evidence that TCKs find a shared identity with other TCKs.

Daniel was raised in the Armed Forces, as was his friend. Daniel's friend prefaced conversations by re-creating images of a shared history together, despite this not actually occurring. Daniel and his friend were engaged in a process of (re)creating an artificial memory for one another; an idea that they did something together in the past. This helped them to feel connected with one another. Indeed, Daniel articulated that he was better able to talk with this person, perhaps because they 'shared' a past. This shared past solidified their identity as 'Forces kids' and facilitated their relationship. As such belonging exists for TCKs with other TCKs (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001)

***Daniel:** He's the one that I can talk most often about those topics with. So, as I say, we don't have a relationship outside of work, but it is the best relationship in this particular company, I have.*

***Researcher:** And that shared experience, cause you said he's got a similar background.*

***Daniel:** I suppose, we often precede conversations the most by saying, umm, oh he does it more than me, actually, but umm, "I'm sure you remember when we were overseas?" but I know he doesn't remember when he and I knew each other. He just means that shared experience that you did something. That style of life. Daniel: p. 18, L. 353-364*

Dora described how when she met her husband they had a mutual understanding based on similar experiences as a child. She related that the experience of meeting her future husband was

‘incredible’, which demonstrated a sense of relief that someone could understand her so well. The fact that he had been through ‘it’, being a TCK, himself, suggested there was a shared past which made it easier for her to relate to him and vice versa. He ‘just knew’ implied a sense of relief that Dora didn’t have to explain herself; because they were from the same group they had a short hand for sharing information. Dora could then relax into this relationship secure in the knowledge that he would understand her without lengthy explanation.

*See when I met my husband I had to explain nothing, ‘cause he understood. He’d been through the same thing himself and it was just an incredible, I couldn’t, I-I couldn’t put my finger on what it was but you know going to the different schools, making new friends, living in strange places. He’d been through all of it himself so he just knew.*

Dora: p. 25, L. 733-740

Both these extracts reminded me of the earlier theme, ‘lack of understanding’ and how the TCKs experienced so much confusion related to their ability to explain themselves or their lifestyles to others. It also reminded me of my own inferences about what the participants were talking about when they used the phrase ‘you know’- that I felt that I did understand what they were talking about, without asking for deeper clarification. A shared ‘understanding’ of background seemed a natural way of combating this lack of understanding and I was encouraged to recall the TCK definition of a TCK as someone’s whose ‘*sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.*’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p 19). I have thought of belonging as being found only with other TCKs and was thrilled to find this in my own data. However, closer and honest inspection also found ‘belonging’ in a very phenomenological way, that is, through the ‘interpretation’ of a similar background.

Ellen described how she met people on her first day at a new school and discovered that they all had parents from England. Ellen said that she ‘automatically’ had things ‘in common’ with her new friends, however she focused her answer to further probing on what she had in ‘common’ with the friend with an English father. Ellen ‘assumes’ that she had things in common because they both had British parents. Ellen was surprised that she would have anything in common with this girl because she looked Chinese, rather than English. The discovery that she was actually half British helped Ellen orientate herself to certain shared commonalities from which they developed a friendship. They both shared a British or English identity and this provided a basis from which they could form a friendship. Ellen did not share a TCK ‘similar background’, but an ‘English’ one. Her

shared identity was with other English people, which gave her a sense of belonging within this group.

**Ellen:** [ ] the girls that turned around to talk to me were both half Chinese, [ ] one was half Chinese half Canadian and one was half Chinese half British and so I was like I automatically had stuff in common with them that I didn't think I'd have

**Researcher:** Could you could you say more about that? How do you how do you know that you had more in common with them?

**Ellen:** Um, I guess just by assumption really because they were like 'where are you from'? And I said 'England' and C. said to me, 'Oh my dad's English, like straight cast' and I was like 'oh right' which kind of surprised me because she looked more Chinese than she looked English, um, and then we kind of got talking through that[ ]. Ellen, p. 3, L. 55-75

In the final excerpt Jake described how the people he maintained friendships with people who came from 'different backgrounds'. Jake seemed conscious that his 'different background' made it too much of a challenge to maintain friendships with people that did not also have similarly 'different background'. He felt that he was judged to be an 'idiot' by people who were not 'different' and trailed off from his story further, perhaps because the memory is painful. By contrast, the people he maintained friendships with came from 'different backgrounds' and thus could associate with his struggle. The shared 'association' meant that Jake could open up to them, share his struggles, and thus remain friends with them. Jake's self-concept is that of being 'different'. To find belonging he located others who were also 'different' and (re)created a shared past with them. This shared past of being 'different' facilitated the friendship.

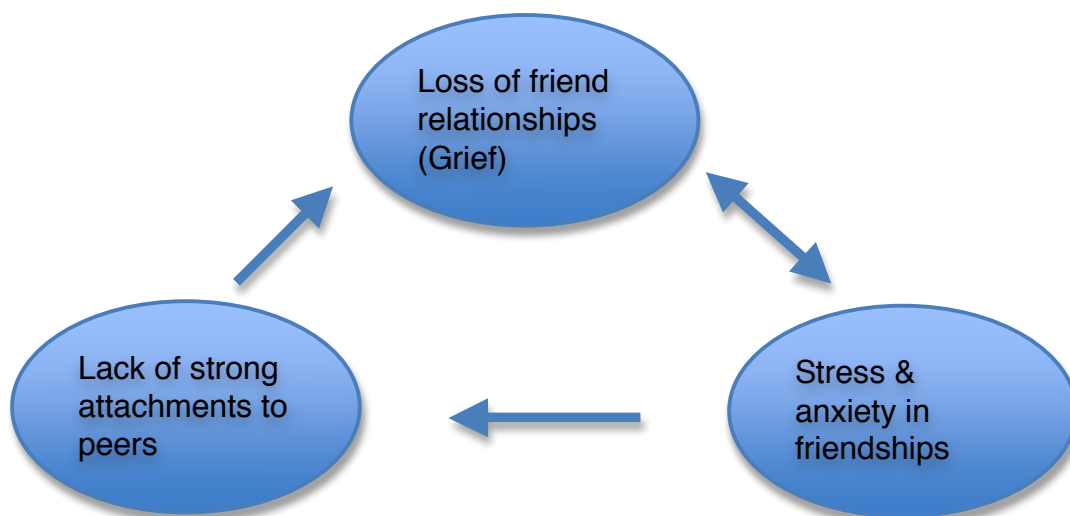
**Researcher:** Were you sharing the difficulties that you were having?

**Jake:** There were a couple of people, a couple of people that I could share with and I did share. And those were the guys that I was able to maintain friendships and did maintain friendships with. The vast majority not. And even those, the only ones, I'm thinking of a couple of guys that they'd come from different backgrounds as well. So they could asso- they could associate with the, the, the, the, the, the, the issues that I was facing in a similar way. Uhh, the vast majority of people from that, from there just couldn't

*relate to what, the problems I was facing. They thought I was just being an idiot and not...yeah. Jake: p. 29, L. 488-500*

### 5.3 The psychological impact of friendship

This theme conveys the emotional, cognitive and behavioural consequences of friendship upon the person that participants described in their narratives. It reveals a pattern of grief due to loss, anxiety related to further losses and lack of strong attachments, possibly as a defence mechanism (Lemma, 2003), which ultimately prompted further losses. This pattern is illustrated in the diagram below and articulated further through discussion of the subordinate themes.



**Diagram 1:** Diagram showing a formulation of the theme the psychological impact of friendship for ATCKs from the UK.

#### 5.3.1 Grief about the loss of friendship

In terms of being internationally mobile a frequent and recurrent theme for all the participants was the loss of friendship. Both John and Daniel experienced loss ‘all the time’, which suggested that they had no experience that friendship could be anything other than brief in their overseas locations.

Daniel experienced the frequent loss of childhood friendships. He said friends ‘came and went’, which conveyed an image of people rushing past him in an incoherent blur. Within his narrative was a sense of fatalism; Daniel had accepted that his losses were inevitable because they occurred so often.

*[ ] People came and went and you accepted that all the time. Daniel, p. 1, L. 4-5*

John used the term ‘revolving and rotating’. Much as one can get stuck in a revolving door, John seemed stuck in a cycle of friendship formation and loss, which reminded me of the early theme of lack of autonomy. The use of the word ‘die’ to describe the loss of friendship was particularly provocative. For John, losing friends was not only inevitable but also a shocking and miserable experience that involved grieving.

*It was just Forces Kids coming and going all the time. And it’s just this constant kind of revolving and rotating group of friends almost [ ] John: p. 19, L. 438-440.*

*I think in some respects the friendships do die. John: p. 24, L. 526-527*

John and Daniel described loss of friendship while residing overseas, but others referred to loss of friendship when they were themselves leaving the country of residence and returning to the UK or on to another posting; the process of leaving friends behind was not any less painful.

Dora hoped that she would keep in touch with friends when she relocated, unfortunately this was not the case and she had to deal with the loss of her friendships. Given the high mobility characteristic of the TCK lifestyle, forming lasting friendships is a challenge. To maintain friendships, regular communication, among other things, is essential (Blieszner and Adams, 1992). Dora illustrated that without communication it is not possible to maintain friendships.. Dora not only lost a number of friends but as a result of the loss she was quite lacking in some ‘good’ quality of friendship until adolescence. This felt quite sad to me and alerted me to thinking about grief in the process of loss, reflected in other TCK research (Gilbert, 2008).

*[ ], I think we made friends very quickly, but they also didn’t stay in touch, so the first bunch that I came across that I really made good friends with was in Wales when I was about fourteen or fifteen Dora: p.5, L. 122-126.*

Jake also described the loss of friendships when he returned to the UK. He used the word ‘initially’ to describe the separation from his friends as ‘tough’. Jake struggled to articulate his losses, stuttering over his words and I had a sense of Jake not being able to recognise, or articulate the depth his sadness about his losses. It seemed as though Jake had to harden

himself for a period of time against the element of loss, which only healed with the passage of time and the formation of a new friendship with his future wife. Toughening himself for a time was a useful way of coping with the losses before he was able to distract himself or replace what was 'tough' with a 'new chapter' in life.

*Initially it was quite tough actually. Because we were so close and, d-d- your life revolved around those guys. And, umm, you, you felt, I felt and bit, I remember feeling a bit of a loss. And that carried on for a good year or so, actually until, actually until I met [wife] and a then a new chapter of life started. Jake: p.39, L. 698-675*

### **5.3.2 Friendship as stressful: anxiety and fear in friendships**

A notable feature of the participants' accounts of friendship was the experience of stress and its associated emotions, such as fear and anxiety (c.f. Lovallo, 1997). The participants experienced anxiety connected with their memories of loss, of being alone, fear of being rejected, or being misunderstood within friendships. A desire to make and maintain friendships was often in a bid to avoid the possibility of these negative experiences rather than to gain anything else.

Preceding the formation of friendship was often a fear that one might be misunderstood or rejected; in these cases there was often a lack of preparation for the new environment (e.g. Ellen). In maintaining the friendship there was often a fear that one might be 'discovered' to be faking it and ultimately rejected (e.g. Lucy). The participants reported tolerating these unpleasant experiences in favour of the potential consequences of not doing so, that is, lack of belonging, which we are all motivated to avoid (Baumeister, and Leary, 1995).

John stated as a matter of fact that if one could not make friends, one would be lonely. Throughout his narrative was a desire to form friendships in order to avoid loneliness rather than to gain anything else. His emphasis on the word 'be', implied he was almost desperate to form friendships. It is unfortunate that I did not ask directly what being lonely was like, but his acknowledgement that 'it can be kinda lonely' if you don't 'get involved' suggested that loneliness was something he would rather avoid. John was motivated to pursue friendships out of fear of loneliness rather than the joy of making a connection or the pleasure of getting to know another person.

***John:** So I feel like you kind of have that desire to find out a lot about people and what they are doing and, and get involved with them and, and, and also try and just be*

*entertaining and do like... because you want people to almost BE your friend, if that makes sense, in that short period. Because you know it's gonna change.*

**Researcher:** *Yeah...*

**John:** *and it can be kinda lonely if you don't have that situation.*

**Researcher:** *Yeah...*

**John:** *cause, you know, well, oh, if I don't make any friends here, that's it, I'm without friends in this situation for however many months I'm here. John. p. 9, L. 194-207*

Alli also articulated anxiety in her experience of friendships. Her description evoked images of someone walking on eggshells to maintain her friendships. She was 'constantly' aware that she might cause discord in her circle of friends, and risk rejection as a consequence. She accepted this heightened state of anxiety to avoid the potential alternative, which might be loneliness. Alli feared rejection from her group and adjusted her behaviour accordingly. This relates well to the earlier theme of 'faking it to fit in'. Alli adjusted her behaviour to fit in with her social group and was judged to be relatable, thus shaping her identity. Alli was a young woman in a state of heightened anxiety because she faked an identity to fit in, worked hard to maintain this and feared rejection if she did not.

*[ ] I think the guys had a different bond with each other than the girls had with each other. With the girls it always felt like it was a bit love hate. It always felt like you were constantly going to upset someone or going to argue with someone or going to put your foot out of place [ ] Alli: p. 23, L. 548-554.*

*[ ] there's such expectations of who you were and who you had to be Alli: p. 24, L. 571-572.*

Ellen's account revealed a variety of anxieties about friendship. Ellen seemed anxious about forming friendships as well as maintaining them. She spoke of the challenges of not knowing what to expect, of going to 'the other side of the world', with little preparation for the 'huge' and 'massive' changes she encountered. She exhibited self-doubt in that she only 'thinks' she adjusted, not that she did. The self-doubt throughout her narrative depicted an image of someone living with



a heightened state of anxiety within friendships for which, even years later, retrospectively, there was no reprieve.

*[ ] I was going to the other side of the world with my family err and yeah, didn't know what to expect, didn't know what to expect from my school, so it was a huge change and a massive challenge and yeah, I kind of slotted into it OK I think. I was really worried about it and being the oldest of three kids in my family, I just felt well if I can't do it how are they going to feel. Ellen. p. 8, L. 179-188*

I would argue that the stress of friendship is greater in a TCK than a non-TCK community and thus tolerated more because the reserve of people to choose from in an expatriate community is much smaller than in a non-TCK community. Lucy articulated this particularly well when she recounted that there were only 50 or so people in her school (page, 65; 'Faking it to fit in'). Typically, the people TCKs go to school with are also those they play with and are additionally the children of their parent's friends. Nancy mentioned this when she described socialising with the children of her parents' friends, who were also her neighbours and the peers she went to school with:

*So you had to get on with everybody because it was such a small group. You couldn't afford to fall out with people really and you didn't want to because you were there for each other. Nancy, p. 36, L. 1031-1035*

However, once the TCK left the expatriate community they still reported stress in friendship experiences. This was due to a variety of reasons such as, lack of knowledge of social cues and norms in the new community. In this way TCKs may exhibit symptoms of reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2007), as occurred for Nancy, who failed to understand the people around her, the 'Brits'.

*So I think I've you know I was back being one of the oldest in my year and I didn't and I just didn't get the Brits. Um, and I was angry about coming back. And I ... I didn't enjoy it. Nancy. P, 16, L. 431-434.*

Daniel also reported difficulty when trying to make himself understood by his peers and that he lacked an understating of 'English' occupations, such as cricket. Cricket was particular to Daniel, but I located a similar themes throughout all the participants accounts which is further discussed and related to the themes of lack of understanding between TCKs and non-TCKs. Ultimately, like Daniel below, the participants described problems understating their peers

and could not participate in people's conversations which caused them stress in the formation and maintenance of friendships.

*And so I have conversations in England and it usually take me several goes to make sure my message is understood. Daniel: p. 14, L. 291-293*

*And I can admit to him [a ATCK] I know nothing about cricket, whereas somebody else, there are English people who might think, you're an English person and you don't know about cricket, where have you been for your whole life. Daniel: p. 17, L. 346-349*

For Lucy stress in friendship experiences was also present when she returned to the UK. Lucy transferred her previous experiences of friendship from her overseas situation on to new friendships and failed to trust new relationships. Lucy's comments suggested that her anxiety about friendship stemmed from the multiple losses of friendship due to frequent overseas moves. These losses then influenced her future friendships. She described not feeling 'secure' in the present tense, despite talking about childhood friendships. This suggested that being a TCK had long-term implications for friendship in adulthood, notably the experience of feeling insecure, or anxious in friendships.

*[ ] I think probably as a child that moved around a lot the friendships never stayed for very long. So, therefore ... I don't feel secure, so therefore they [friendships] were never trusted. ... I think that's what I mean. Lucy: p. 5, L. 85-89*

### **5.3.3 Lack of strong attachments to peers**

This theme describes the way participants coped with multiple losses of friendship by establishing a certain distance between themselves and their peers, which stopped them from forming strong attachments to others. This theme was slightly different from the theme of an independent self in that 'lack of strong attachments' was not a conscious decision to behave in a certain way, as in an 'independent' identity, but rather, an unconscious process of disengagement and detachment from the friendship. The two are not completely separate and could function in tandem, where independent self is a conscious choice and low levels of attachment and unconscious result of frequent losses.

John explained that his friendships were brief. The words, 'short' and 'snappy' evoked images of something quite superficial. I thought of a cartoon, which conveys a story, keeps one entertained, but lacks any real substance. John's friendships lacked a certain depth because John could not engage with the friendship for long enough. His father's advice to him really drove this home, when he said 'you don't really have friends'. This suggested that there was a quality of friendship John could not have, much like Dora lacking 'good' friends (see above excerpt p. 77), John was also lacking in some quality of friendship, due to his mobile lifestyle. John's friends were 'acquaintances'. This word is collegial; it implies a business connection, rather than anything more substantial and revealed a lack of any strong attachment to others. John's father implied that John could not have more from his friendships because they were in the business of moving and therefore had to keep friendships business-like.

*[ ] friendship for me was, was, sometimes very brief. Umm, you know it was short, snappy, and uh, you know I remember thinking and uh I remember my dad saying to me that you don't really have friends, you have acquaintances in our life. John: p. 1, L. 8-18*

The advice of John's father and John's resultant expectations of friendship resonated with me long after the interview. It made me wonder about attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1988) and relating, as I hadn't come across it in the TCK literature previously. I was, however, aware of attachment in the friendship literature (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991) and began reading more. Despite 'bracketing' what I was learning between the data analysis of each interview I found more evidence of the same notion for each participant. John seemed to display an insecure style and as I looked between cases this became a theme. This reminded me of the claim that TCKs cope with the challenge of transition by becoming socially detached (Useem, 1993).

Ellen talked about her friends in Hong Kong 'still' doing the 'same thing' when she returned for holidays. Her description suggested that her former friends were stuck in time, whereas Ellen had moved on and therefore no longer had anything in common with her peers. This made the friendships seem lacking in some essential quality (notably identification; Ellen is no longer the same as her peers), which functioned to allow Ellen to break the connections and establish bonds with new people. Ellen severed the connections between herself and her relationships through an unconscious process of detachment.

*[ ] All the girls that I used, girls and boys I suppose, that I used to hang out in Hong Kong were all still in Hong Kong doing the same thing that they'd been doing for the last four years and I was like well this is great, I'm earning money, I've met this new group of people we get on really well [ ] Ellen: p. 24, L. 684-691*

In contrast, Alli seemed aware that she was rejecting friendships from fear of loss.

*I have often thought to myself that I wonder if I always kept all my friendships temporary... because I made a lot of really good friends and they'd always leave, you know? Alli: p.2, L. 37-40*

Later on in the interview, however, Alli seemed less conscious that she was rejecting friendships, this time because she could no longer identify with past peers. Alli found her previous friends attitude 'unbearable'. She cast them in a very negative light, which allowed her to let go of those relationships. By viewing her friends negatively she was able to separate herself from her past relationships and move forward.

*Alli: It's just so unbearable, it's unbearable, and the thing is, is that I think I went there with that attitude that I see in a lot of people still, that cockiness.*

**Researcher:** *The people from Hong Kong you mean?*

*Alli: Yes, that cockiness, that arrogance that better than everyone else. I mean thank God I went to boarding school. Alli: p. 15, L. 368-374*

Daniel used a similar technique to avoid potential relationships, rather than those from his past. Daniel related that he was unable to participate in a discussion of past events when meeting the parents of a girlfriend. Several interesting things occurred in his monologue. First, Daniel suggested that he was being 'trapped' into a relationship. These made the objects of his situation (a new girlfriend and her parents) seem like predators. Daniel was thus positioned as a victim of others so he could justifiably reject their advances. Secondly, he was lightly mocking the conversation and thus the family by prolonging his emphasis on the word 'so'. In doing this he created an image of the family being quite self-involved, this had the effect of further prompting my sympathy for Daniel as an unwilling participant of this relationship, and again justified in wishing to end it. Finally, Daniel referred to himself in third person. This functioned to separate him from the group

and created distance between him and the other people involved. Daniel had engaged in successfully removing himself from the relationship and engendering my wish for him to do so.

*I briefly had an early girlfriend and I went round to meet the parents and them and the parents were talking about things that had been going on previously and I felt awfully like I was getting trapped into some permanent relationship I didn't want to know about. Cause it was sooo, with her parents, with her and then talking about all the things that had been going on before Daniel. Daniel, p. 7, L. 150-157*

Similarly, Nancy engendered my sympathy for her reasons to reject friendships with her peers. Nancy described the 'pack instinct' of children, as her reason for avoiding friendships with people her own age. She set herself up as an outsider and justified in her reasons to prefer adult company to the company of children. If children are predatory then there is a justifiable reason to withdraw from them. The adults by contrast were more understanding of Nancy's differences and made her feel safe, whereas the children were less tolerant and made her feel anxious. This anxiety caused Nancy to reject her peers and thus any strong attachments to people her own age.

*[ ] I never had any problems talking to adults and sometimes I found them less complicated than the kids. Particularly groups of kids, I think on an individual basis children are OK, but on, a when they get into a group it's a little bit like a pack instinct. Nancy: p. 5, L. 123-129*

## **5.4 Valued characteristics of friendship**

This theme describes traits participants mentioned most valuing in their friendships as a result of their experiences of being a TCK.

### **5.4.1 Openmindedness of others as essential to friendship formation and maintenance**

The concept of being 'open' to others or open-mindedness or being 'non-judgemental' was a recurring topic for all participants in their accounts of friendship. Many of the participants' friendship choices were formed on the basis of their peer being 'open-minded' and/or non-judgmental. This suggested that ATCKs were engaged in a process of searching for acceptance, that friendship functioned as acceptance for self. This theme is related to, but slightly different from, the subordinate theme of faking it to fit in, where the ATCK reported having to being something other

than who they. In contrast, the ATCK reported finding acceptance for their difference by forming relationships with others who were ‘open-minded’ or ‘non-judgemental’. This finding is mirrored by studies that report that TCKs score higher in measures of open-mindedness and cultural empathy (Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009) and report intolerance for narrow-mindedness (Willis, et al, 1994, p. 35; Cameron, 2003), it makes sense that TCKs would be searching for these features in others to confirm their world view.

In his dialogue Daniel distinguished between people who were welcoming of others, and those who were not, because they had a shared experience with one another. The shared experience of being a TCK allowed people to be more ‘open’ with others, including people they had no experience of, or ‘strangers’. Without this quality of being open, strangers, such as Daniel, were ‘excluded’ which prevented the formation of friendship.

*People who have a shared experience in the past tend to be more open. I think they get together and spot somebody who has the same problem and talk to them, and include more people. They include strangers that they are not familiar with. People who know each other well stick together and exclude everybody else. Daniel: p. 26, L. 528-535*

In the following passage Nancy explained that she became friends with people at her school who were ‘non-conformist’, that is, they were people who did not comply with generally accepted patterns of behaviour or thought. Such people are considered more accepting of difference and she qualified this with her statement that they had a more ‘outward’ looking view. This outward looking view meant that they could see past her differences and accepted her as a peer. She also said they were ‘good people’, not simply the rule-breakers traditional amongst non-conformists. This demonstrated how valuable her friends’ open-mindedness was in forming the friendship.

***Nancy:** There were some people there [at boarding school] who were very non-conformist. [ ] and I definitely gravitated towards them.*

***Researcher:** mmm*

***Nancy:** [ ] There was some stronger characters, you know, good people.*

***Researcher:** mmm*

***Nancy:** Um, with, just a more outward looking view on the world. It was less insular, people had lived abroad, [ ] Nancy: p.31-32, L. 883-894*

Jake also found acceptance when he discovered he could be ‘normal’ with others. He found confirmation that his sense of self was acceptable with people who had been ‘challenged’ in their past. Such people demonstrated to him that there are ‘other ways of living’ and other ‘paths’ available. This suggested that Jake’s friends were open to alternative approaches and viewpoints. With these friends he found acceptance for his differences, whereas others left him questioning himself and in doubt about his future.

***Jake:** [ ] they [my new peers in the UK] were able to relate to the fact that there was another world out there [ ]*

***Researcher:** How did that feel? That there was someone out here who had had a similarly challenging experience, albeit different?*

***Jake:** Those guys made it easier to, for me to feel I, I, that I was still normal that, that, ‘cause, ‘cause there was other ways of living. And also it triggered the thoughts that actually there’s, that I don’t have to go down that path and I can do other things. Jake: p. 30, L. 510-522*

Lucy explained that her friendships were with people who were more like her. Much like Jake, people who were also ‘different’ would accept Lucy. To be accepting of difference and to find acceptance for self, potential friends had to be ‘open minded’.

***Lucy:** I think yeah my friendships were very different because I was finding people who were much more like me who has similar ideas but I think and tha- that’s, that’s progressed over time so even discovering other people who’ve had similar experiences in terms of moving that’s been a you know great bonus, joy.*

***Researcher:** Mmm. Wh-what do you mean when you say ‘like me’? [ ]*

***Lucy:** Umm, who had, who maybe felt a bit different. So square pegs in round holes. Umm who wanted to do similar things. Who were open minded. Who had experiences of different cultures. Lucy: p. 12, L. 239-251*

#### 5.4.2 Supportiveness as an important feature of friendship

All participants reported that supportiveness was essential to them in forming and maintaining friendships. What constituted supportiveness varied between participants, but was most typically associated with helping behaviour or a ‘family-like’ support offered by peers.

In the first passage Jake described a friendship he had with a woman called B. He said he would have ‘gone to the ends of the earth’ to do anything for her, because she reciprocated; it worked ‘both ways’. He mentioned acts of support such as working together and helping one another, which facilitated a ‘strong relationship’. Supportiveness has been identified as essential for successfully navigating change especially during transition (Goodman, et al, 2006). Therefore it seems natural that, as TCKs experience considerable transitions and change, supportiveness emerges as a highly valued feature of friendship. It also seems that supportiveness is difficult to find as establishing supportive relationships takes time (as Jake notes when he reported that trust ‘grew’ over time) a luxury many TCKs and ATCKs do not have as they transition frequently from one place to the next (e.g. John who was in one school for only six weeks, see excerpt on page 49).

*So, I would have gone to the ends of the earth to do whatever she asked for. Because that trust had been earned both ways. So that was a very big part of that friendship. So and that, but that grew, why that was so valuable was because that grew over time. As we worked together, or helped each other or did things together, that trust grew so that you knew that if B said she was going to do something then it was going to happen. And you also knew that she would be thinking about you in, in situations. So that’s why it was a strong relationship. Jake: p. 16, L. 241-252.*

Ellen described being able to ‘count on’ her friends. She believed her friends would ‘drop everything’, to support her if she found herself in a predicament and that she was more ‘lucky’ than people who did not enjoy this aspect of friendships. Her narrative suggested that supportiveness was an important feature of friendship, but also that being a TCK made her more appreciative of her supportive friendships. Navigating the various changes and transitions of a TCK lifestyle awakened her to the significance of supportiveness that a non-TCK may take for granted, as they will likely not experience as many transitions. Ellen’s passage also highlights the misfortune of not having supportive relationships, as those that are not supported would be by contrast ‘unlucky’



*But, I don't know, [growing up overseas] makes me appreciate the fact that I've got friends no matter where they are in the world that I can count on and that I know would drop everything and anything and I think other people maybe they don't have that and they're not as lucky as me [ ] Ellen: p. 38, L. 1071-1078*

During Alli's interview she mentioned that people in London (where she was currently residing) did not have family around to offer support. However, she was 'lucky' enough to have family who could offer support living close by. In the absence of 'traditional' sources of support, such as family, Alli placed an emphasis on the support she received from others, notably her friends from boarding school. Many TCKs reside in countries far removed from their families (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Storti, 2003), as a result they will not have traditional supportive relationships with family members, as such friends will take on a significant role as supportive members of the TCKs network.

*Very few people in London have their parents around and when you have kids you need support from people. I'm very lucky to have a sister around the corner, but, you know and I think that's the thing with boarding school is that, there you just become each other's family, so, you're close. Alli: p. 21, L. 479-485*

John related that he was without a 'core group' of friends before the age of eighteen. This 'core' depicted an image of something foundational, a beginning point, something to provide nutrients from which to grow and develop. It felt like John was in the process of searching for something to sustain himself, something from which he could explore the world safely or 'carry' him through difficult transitions, much as supportive relationships do (Goodman, et al, 2006). By saying that it was 'annoying', John was expressing frustration that this 'core', this supportiveness, was missing in his life before the age of eighteen. However, he reported that he did eventually developed a sustaining group of friends to function supportively; if he were to 'fall back' there would be someone to break his fall. He noted that not having support was a 'separate lifetime' ago, which suggested that having found supportive relationships he could not believe he functioned without this property of friendship before. This again suggested that support is an important feature of friendship for ATCKs and TCKs.

*And yeah, so it is kind of annoying, going back to your initial question there. That I don't have that core friendship to carry, to fall back on. Uh, so it's like I don't have really, any major friends, who I can say, from before the age of eighteen that I can say,*

*if I was in trouble I could ring them up and say hey can you come and help me out? I don't think I could, and it is kind of annoying, and it, it, almost feels like it's a separate lifetime. John: p, 26, L. 568-576*

## **6.0 Discussion**

This chapter is concerned with a summary of the findings from the current research. A discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research as well as recommendations for future study will be considered. I will explore some of the implications for clinical practice this research highlights before offering a conclusion.

### **6.1 Summary**

The aim of this study was to describe the friendship experiences of ATCKs from the UK. In particular, it focused on the challenges and rewards of friendship as well as the identity of ATCKs in response to their friendships. The findings from the current study align with some of the general literature regarding TCKs and ATCKs, in that participants in the current sample reported considerable challenges in their experiences of friendship. In addition the ATCKs sense of identity was greatly affected by the experience of friendship. I will review the findings in the context of the available literature and describe how it develops some of the arguments made and highlight areas not previously articulated.

### **6.2 The challenges of friendships and the psychological affect**

In relation to the current study's significant findings, it is apparent that ATCKs exhibit a number of cognitive and behavioural responses to friend relationships that affect the formation and maintenance of friendships. With regard to the theme 'the challenges of friendship' for ATCKs it seems natural that they would then articulate the 'psychological impact of friendship' as many of the challenges resonate emotionally, cognitively and behaviourally. These two superordinate themes are closely linked and can be developed through a discussion of the psychological theory that informs friendship research.

#### **6.2.1 Insufficient autonomy to form lasting friendships**

Lack of autonomy has not been articulated in TCK literature that I can locate. Evolutionary theorists suggest that striving for autonomy is a motivation for relationship changes (Steinberg, 1988). From this perspective, distance in the parent-child relationship at adolescence serves to facilitate the formation of appropriate peer relationships outside the family. Without the development of distance between parent and child appropriate peer relationships are difficult to

form. TCKs do not have the luxury of distance from their parents as they reside in small expatriate communities, which are often separated from larger local communities. Autonomy is, therefore, a challenge and thus developing appropriate friend relationships can be a challenge. From an attachment perspective, peers take on greater significant attachment roles as children gradually separate from their caregivers in adolescence (Lieberman, Doyle & Markiewicz, 1999). Given the lack of autonomy, among other challenges, these attachment relationships seem to be a challenge to form resulting in insecure attachment styles of relating, discussed later. However, when TCKs do separate or establish their independence, as they do when they assert their 'independent' self for example, they may still experience other challenges, such as lack of understanding about others and from others.

### **6.2.2 Lack of understanding between ATCKs and non-TCKs**

As discussed in chapter 2, TCKs may feel a sense of 'neglect' when they return to their passport country (Cotrell and Useem, 1993b; Minami, 1993; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001), or experience social isolation resulting from a lack of belonging to a particular social group (Downie, 1976; Gerner, et al, 1992). These findings have been discussed in TCK literature in terms of a 'sense' that non-TCKs do not understand or want to share the TCKs' experiences of growing up internationally. The current study gives credence to and further illuminates this argument by providing greater detail about the sense of non-understanding. Several of the participants in the current study described non-TCK peers 'disallowing' or 'rejecting' certain topics of conversations, which stunted the formation of a friendships with non-TCK peers and created anxiety for the participants in this study. In addition there was confusion about the lifestyle choices of the ATCK, which left ATCKs feeling 'different' from others and anxious about forming friend relationships. Although TCKs may look the same as the majority of their peers in their passport country, they may not behave the same way or know what is culturally appropriate (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009), which can lead to adjustment difficulties (Pedersen and Sullivan, 1964). The TCKs own lack of understanding about societal norms understandably has an impact on their friendship experiences as suggested in the current research. Participants reported not understanding group friendships, pop culture references or sports phenomenon. The concern with social adjustment reported by TCKs returning to their passport country (Austin, 1986) seems to stem from their uncertainty about interpersonal relationships in the context of not understanding social norms and the associated fear of social alienation. This had the unfortunate consequence of stunting a friend relationship, or creating anxiety between ATCKs and non-TCKs. As an extension of this theme, a lack of understanding

between ATCKs and ‘English’ peers received frequent mention in the data and formed a separate subordinate theme in this study.

### **6.2.3 Negative beliefs about people from the UK: The ‘English/British’**

The concept of ‘Englishness’ or ‘Britishness’ (both terms were used interchangeably and for ease of writing will be presented as ‘Englishness’), which has been defined in opposition to multiculturalism (Mann, 2011), was often evoked during the interviews, with a negative affect on friend relationships.

The ‘Englishness’ articulated by participants in the current research revealed both a negative view of others and a negative view of self. Research indicates that TCKs from the USA report some difficulty relating to their own cultural group (Cottrell and Useem, 1993). The current research articulates this for a British sample; ATCKs from the UK seem to have difficulty relating to their UK peers. For the participants in this study ‘Englishness’ was a challenge in a variety of ways. Firstly, ‘Englishness’ impeded the development of friendship because the ATCKs in this study found their English peers difficult to get to know, or even understand. The participants in this study used stereotypes to fill in their gaps in knowledge that led to a fairly negative image of Englishness.

With regard to a negative view of others the notion of ‘Englishness’ as a challenge seemed also to be a form of covert racism. Ridley (1989) has described racism as being either overt or covert in nature. Overt racism is demonstrated when a person’s prejudices prevent them from accepting minority acquaintances and is always intentional. Covert racism can be either intentional, whereby a relationship is dismissed to avoid social discomfort, or unintentional, whereby elements of a person’s culture are misinterpreted due to lack of knowledge about the individual’s own culture. The ATCKs, demonstrated covert racism when their lack of knowledge, demonstrated by the use of stereotypes, prevented them from getting to know their ‘English’ peers.

In addition to negative views of the ‘English’, the ATCKs own ‘Englishness’ also presented a difficulty, as ATCKs believed others might perceive them negatively, using the same stereotypes that the TCKs used to identify themselves. This resulted in ATCKs having to work hard in certain peer relationships to disconfirm negative beliefs others might hold about their ‘English’ heritage and meant friendships were challenging, stressful and often mirrored a negative self-image. This negative self-image reflected the ATCKs view of their own ‘Englishness’ as negative. This self-concept appears to be a form of internalised racism (Pyke, 2010), and/or disowning part of the self

and links can be made with attachment theory and the concept of the false-self discussed in section 6.3.1. Ultimately, the negative beliefs about self and other disallowed the development of peer relationships with appropriate peers that would disconfirm the negative beliefs ATCKs held with regard to 'Englishness'.

#### **6.2.4 Keeping in touch with others as a challenge to maintaining friendship**

Finchum (2005) suggests that maintaining the perception of the existence of a well-connected social support system could be accomplished with a single, annual contact, vis-à-vis the Christmas card. An emotional attachment to others need not necessarily take the form of frequent physical contact and the ATCKs in this study model this. Despite the flexibility the participants demonstrated in maintaining contact with others they regarded keeping in touch with their friends a challenge, often resulting in the loss of friend relationships. Maintaining contact with significant others is a form of attachment behaviour, known as seeking proximity (Bowlby, 1969). An inability to connect with a person with whom one is attached results in separation anxiety, or distress resulting from being separated. This distress can be seen in the theme grief about the loss of friendship.

#### **6.2.5 Grief about the loss of friendship**

The TCK research on culture shock highlights multiple experiences of loss and unresolved grief (Gerner et al, 1992; Gilbert, 2008; Jordan, 2002; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Werkman et al, 1981; Van Reken, 1988). The current study reiterates this most practically by highlighting the very tangible loss of friend relationships in ATCKs' lives.

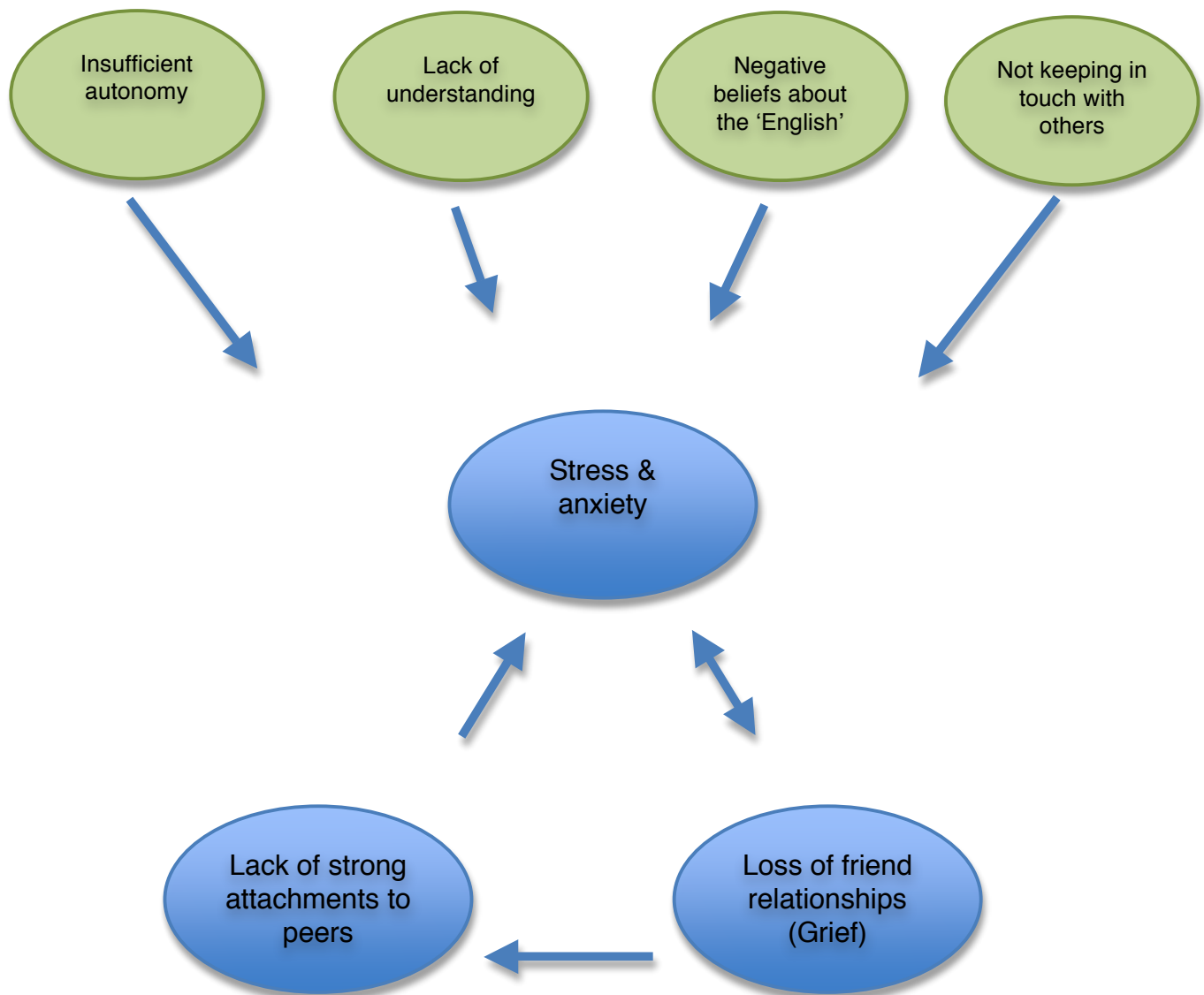
Loss or separation from significant others is an important feature of attachment theory. The initial reaction to loss of an attachment relationship is intense separation-protest behaviour, followed by the recognition that the loss cannot be recovered, accompanied by a period of profound sadness (Bowlby, 1969, 1988). This eventually subsides and most people achieve a useful degree of emotional detachment from the lost figure. The latter two stages can be identified in the current research. Of particular significance to me was the use of the term 'die' by John to describe his experience of loss of friendship. The effect of loss on the experience of grief has been well documented (Worden, 2009), and has been mentioned in the TCK literature (Gilbert, 2008), but no links have so far been made to attachment theory. As a precursor to the grief, I noticed in the subordinate theme 'lack of autonomy' the recognition that loss is inevitable and 'can not be recovered'. The volume of losses and separations for ATCKs results in emotional detachment from

the lost figure, but more than this, it seems to affect future attachments to others as the losses (compounded by other challenges to friend relationships) cause, not only grief but also anxiety in ATCKs friend relationships.

#### **6.2.6 Friendship as stressful: anxiety and fear in friendships**

Werkman, et al, (1981) reported that TCKs feel less secure in contemplating relationships than their non-TCK peers, while Killham (1990) reported that TCKs experience a great deal of insecurity in relationships. What was missing from these studies was how a sense of insecurity arises in peer relationships. As such attachment theory may be a useful concept to unravel several of the findings from this study. Saferstein, Neimeyer and Hagans (2005), demonstrated an important link between attachment style and friendship quality in adolescents. Insecurely attached individuals reported lowers levels of companionships and lower levels of security. The ATCKs in this study also report anxiety and fear in their peer relationships, which could be related to their working model of attachment, which resembles an insecure pattern of attachment.

Insufficient autonomy, lack of understanding, negative beliefs about ‘Englishness’ and not keeping in touch with peers all inform the cognitive appraisal that friendship is stressful for ATCK. This appraisal can be used to unravel the subordinate theme that ATCKs ‘lack strong attachments to peers’. The data indicated that ATCKs could not or did not form strong attachments to peers. This can be articulated in the following diagram, which may also be of use to clinicians working with TCKs and ATCKs.



**Diagram 2:** Diagram showing a formulation of the experience of friendship for ATCK from the UK.

### 6.2.7 Lack of strong attachments to peers

The effect of multiple losses has been reported to leave TCKs unwilling to risk further losses, and as such TCKs may distance themselves from other people in order to cope (Van Reken, 1986). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggested that TCKs use a variety of techniques to achieve this distance, including denial that the TCK cares for anyone else, letting go of the friendship earlier



than necessary, or using anger as a shield against the pain of impending separation. The TCK may even go as far as refusing to feel the pain of separation and decline to engage in good-byes. This can segue into emotional detachment from others whereby TCKs 'simply refuse to let themselves care about or need anyone again' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 142). It is not clear how the authors arrived at these conclusions, but the authors suggested that TCKs cope with loss by consciously rejecting friendships. The current research provides evidence that ATCKs from the UK are creating distance between themselves and others. The process is informed by the 'challenges of friendship' and associated with grief related to the loss of friendship and results in the lack of strong attachments to peers.

It is less consciously pre-meditated than previous authors have articulated and may be a function of attachment anxiety. This would expand the cognitive- behavioural conception of ATCKs friendship experiences to include attachment theory, thus providing a basis for considering how attachment models influence the ways ATCKs perceive events in their peer relationships.

Life circumstances have been shown to have an influence on attachment style and behaviour (Bar-Haim, Sutton, Fox and Marvin, 2000). Given the high mobility of TCK families it is possible that the stress of transition affects the attachment relationships between TCK and the main caregiver. Thus studies, which show that early attachment classifications predict the quality of children's social relationships (see Bartholomew, 2010), are particularly important. Insecure attachment styles are associated with less popularity with peers, more aggression and less positive affect in social situations (see Bartholomew, 2010). If early attachment experiences of TCKs with their caregivers are negatively affected by the stress of transition these experiences will affect their social relationships. This is pure conjecture, but the findings from this study suggest that the ATCKs experience challenges, which may be accounted for by attachment theory.

In addition other research suggests that context is an important determinant of attachment behaviour (Fraley, et al, 2011). If the context of the relationship is limited to peer friendships it is possible to hypothesise that the way ATCKs interpret and understand their social worlds is influenced by the multiple challenges they encounter with forming and maintaining peer relationships. The premise that attachment models may influence the ways ATCKs perceive and interpret their social worlds, according to the above caveats may be further unpacked by considering a definition of insecure attachment (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Welch and Houser, 2010).

While it is not possible to ascertain the attachment styles of the participants in this study, some features of attachment behaviour are in evidence. For example, insecure patterns of attachment (fearful and dismissing) demonstrate difficulties in becoming close to and relying on others. The ATCKs in this study demonstrated an inability to get close to others and the value they placed on supportiveness suggests that they had difficulty finding reliable relationships, or perhaps relying on others. An inability to get close to others pre-empts the possibility of establishing close relationships that might otherwise update working models of other people (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). This seems to be the case for the ATCKs in the present study. The diagram above shows this in a cyclic relationship with stress and loss impacting one another and affecting the ATCKs ability to become attached to their peers, which causes further stress, as they lack supportive and affirming relationships.

The lack of strong attachments is not the only result of multiple challenges and losses of friendship. ATCKs also adapted their sense of self in line with peer relationships. It is to this that I now turn my discussion.

### **6.3 Identity in response to friendship**

Identity issues have received frequent attention in the TCK literature. The current research develops some of the observations further, extends existing knowledge by uncovering previously unidentified issues, and more specifically addresses a UK population. I will discuss findings from the current study in line with the symbolic interactionist approach to identity identified in the literature review before turning my attention to attachment theory.

The social psychological debate and more specifically the symbolic interactionist approach can help unravel some of the current findings in light of previous research. The current study utilised the argument that we have as many social identities as there are groups that we feel we belong to and as many personal identities as there are interpersonal relationships in which we are involved (Turner, 1982). As such, knowing ‘who’s who’ and ‘what’s what’ or vice versa have implications for our concept of self and our experience of friendship. Previous research acknowledges that identity is difficult to establish for TCKs. The current study suggests that while this may be a valid argument it may also be that a variety of identities are enacted for TCKs and ATCKs in transacting various social relationships. This has implications for the experience of friendship, which in turn affects identity and both have implications for attachment style.

Downie (1976) explored how TCK returning to the USA managed their identities as they adapted to their new environment. Identity management involved setting aside their third culture experiences and in so doing the TCK became marginalised. Research from the UK made similar links between identity and marginality (Fail et al, 2004), and much has been made of the loss of personal identity (Gilbert, 2008). Schaetti's (2000) argued that interwoven with the experience of being a TCK was the awareness that one was somehow 'different' to others.

The current research corroborates aspects of these arguments, and broadens them for a UK population. The participants in the current study were also aware that they were 'different' to others and utilised a variety of identities to achieve friend relationships. Rather than focusing on the ATCK being marginal, however, the current study reveals how ATCKs achieved friendships with others by adapting their self-identity by faking it to fit in, or by being independent, or emphasising 'shared' elements of the self-identity. In contrast to the Downie study (1976), the current research reveals how ATCKs reorganise their identities not only when adapting to a new environment, but also when encountering different groups of people. This suggests that environment is not the only catalyst for identity management. In keeping with the symbolic interactionist approach to identity the current research suggests that the search for friendship, or the friendship itself can facilitate changes in identity, which do not necessarily lead to marginalisation. The current study revealed that the participants had to engage a 'false', 'independent' or 'shared' identity in order to fit in with certain friendships, thus causing them to view these friendships in a certain way. This relationship between self and context is at the heart of the symbolic interactionist perspective. The notion that we have a variety of selves and that contextual factors can engender different selves has a number of consequences for ATCKs' identity and their experience of friendship. It is to these identities in the context of friendship that I now turn my attention.

### **6.3.1 Feeling 'different' from others**

Much of the TCK literature already highlights the notion that TCKs feel different from others (Schaetti, 2000). The current research corroborates this argument, but provides some detail for the context of those experiences. The participants' noticed, cultural, educational, social and mobility differences, which created challenges for them in terms of their friendships. If the ultimate goal of friendship is to provide identity support (Duck, 1973), TCKs will have a hard time finding others to function in this capacity, given that they feel 'different' from those around them. The participants in this study struggled to find others who could corroborate their identities. Unlike the participants in

other studies they did not only set aside their cultural identity (Downie, 1976; Fail et al, 2004), they set aside other parts of their sense of self, such as their 'social' self, their 'travelling' self and their 'educational' self. In this way they also felt 'out of sync' with their peers. (Cottrell and Useem, 1993b), which is accounted for in the sub-ordinate theme 'faking it to fit in with others'.

### **6.3.2 'Faking' it to fit in with others**

TCK research has previously shown that one possible way that TCKs cope with social anxiety is by disowning their previous experiences and adopting the passport country's cultural norms (Useem, 1993). The current research suggests that TCKs may cope with social anxiety by adopting a 'fake' identity with peers in both the overseas location and the passport country in order to make and maintain friendships. Additionally, previous TCK research suggests that some TCKs avoid conflict with others by projecting a false self and only find their 'true selves' with other TCKs (Walters and Aston-Cuff, 2009). The current research suggests that the ATCKs in this sample do not only project a 'false self' with non-TCKs but that they may also do this with other TCKs, and that this may not only be in order to avoid conflict. It also suggests that finding a true self is not as simple as being with other TCKs. The current research suggests that projecting a false self occurs for both male and female TCKs.

To link the current findings with attachment theory and earlier object relationships one might consider the work of Winnicott (1971). Winnicott (1971) described the 'false self' as an adaptive layer of personality that develops around a person's true self and thus impedes authentic self-expression. He posited that a 'false self' develops in response to an inadequate or 'not good-enough' environment. Given the frequent losses, lack of autonomy and multiple misunderstandings between ATCKs and their peers, one might argue that the ATCK environment is 'not good enough' to facilitate adequate attachments with friends. As such ATCKs may experience attachment anxiety and enact a 'false' identity to fit in with others as a strategy for reducing this anxiety. Unfortunately, this may have the resultant effect of perceiving the friendship to be false and indicates both a negative view of themselves and a negative view of others, which may be indicative of a fearful attachment style.

Alternatively, the notion that self-attributes become increasingly differentiated during adolescence could contribute to feelings of a 'false self' (Erikson, 1980). This is often a function of the assorted and repeated conflicting expectations of significant others. Research has explored the notion of a false self within the contexts of adolescent relationships (Sippola, Buchanan and Kehoe, 2007). The

current research suggests a ‘false self’ is enacted by the ATCKs in this sample. This could be due to adolescence and limited therein, or it could be more far-reaching than that and function as part of the self into adulthood, as evidenced by John the ‘entertainer’. More study would need to be conducted to develop these findings and will be raised further when I consider future directions for this research.

In addition to attachment theory, social exchange theory may also help unravel this theme. The view that people operate to gain rewards and avoid punishments (Canary and Stafford, 2001) is somewhat evidenced here. By adapting their identity the participants are maintaining the attachment and avoiding the consequences of being rejected. It could be that as ATCKs experience frequent losses they are less successful with their relationships and therefore less demanding which has an effect on their identity.

### **6.3.3 Being ‘independent’ from others**

Research has posited that TCKs from the USA regard their greatest strengths as intrapersonal rather than interpersonal (Werkman, et al, 1981). Other research has suggested that while TCKs may feel less secure in contemplating relationships with others they cope with the challenge of transition by becoming more independent and less reliant on others (Huff, 2001) or by becoming socially detached (Useem, 1993). The current research supports these findings for a UK population and provides additional details about the independence. Firstly, independence as a function of the ATCKs identity appears in response to certain friendship experiences and not necessarily the result of frequent moves. Secondly, independence is considered a positive function of self and a way to be more authentic with others. Thirdly, independence is not viewed as a method of detaching from others, but a way of asserting ones autonomy from others, which seems more positive. Finally, independence is viewed as becoming comfortable with ones ‘difference’ from others.

With regard to attachment theory, independence from others could be a way of establishing autonomy not simply from the parents but from friendships that appeared ‘fake’ and undermined their sense of self as well as the friendship. Being independent also functions to cope with transitions when the ATCK must relocate once again. In this way it maintains a positive view of self, where both positive and negative views of others during transition could be accounted for in the data.

#### **6.3.4 A ‘shared’ identity with others**

Finally, the notion that TCKs gravitate to one another (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001) or that TCKs only feel comfortable with other TCKs is supported somewhat by the current finding that ATCKs report a shared identity with others. There was some evidence that ATCKs found it easier to relate to others with a ‘similar’ background. This could be because a sense of belonging for the TCK exists among other TCKs (Fail, et al, 2004; Greenholtz and Kim, 2009; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001), or because they tend to identify more closely with others who have experienced an internationally mobile lifestyle (Gregory, 2002). Researchers have suggested there is greater security and longevity in these relationships, and the current research suggests this may be so. If the ultimate goal of friendship is to achieve identity support through establishing similarity (Duck, 1973), old friends are essential in supporting self and identity through shared experience and mutual contribution to the various interpretations of past and present life events (Hartup and Stevens, 1997). In the absence of long-term friends this may be more complicated and the participants in the current study report an alternative way of achieving shared experiences, that is, by (re)creating a past. That is they acknowledged shared experiences from their individual TCK pasts that facilitated an understanding of similarities and moved the friendship forward. If TCKs can achieve a shared past this may have implications for their view of self and others and may result in a secure attachment to others.

The participants in this study also reported gravitating towards others with a ‘similar’ identity that was not necessarily a TCK identity. This finding is in line with the notion that people select friends who are similar to them as a means to achieve assurance of their own self value (Byrne, 1971; Hartup, 2006) by selecting similar people or those with a ‘shared past’ the ATCKs are engaging in a positive view of self and others, which may make their attachments stronger. In addition social penetration theory could be utilised to account for this finding. This theory suggests that relationships develop through a reciprocal process of disclosure between people (Dindia, 2000, cited by Perlman and Duck, 2006), with cultural influences on the appropriate type of self-disclosure (Duck, 1991). Perhaps a shared identity makes self-disclosure possible for TCKs, and facilitates stronger attachments.

The symbolic interactionist approach adopted in the current research encourages us to acknowledge identity as it arises socially. The aforementioned superordinate themes and the constituent subordinate themes provide insight into how ATCKs adapt their self-concept by reacting to those around them, which in turn affects the friendship. I have even come to think of ATCKs being

‘friendship chameleons’, whereby ATCK adapt themselves flexibly to function within different friendship groups. In this way their sense of self is more inline with the phenomenological self than having a ‘core’ self that remains unchanged, or develops over time. It is a useful method of aligning oneself with various social groups to avoid the inevitability of alone-ness and/or a way of coping with further transitions when necessary, as with being ‘independent’

#### **6.4 Valued characteristics of friendship**

Given the multiple challenges that ATCKs experience and that ATCK view themselves to be ‘different’ and experience rejection or frequent loss and anxiety in their interpersonal relationships, it seems quite natural that they would seek friendships with people who are ‘open-minded’. This finding supports other research that reports TCKs consider themselves to have a broad world view and reported an intolerance of narrow-mindedness (Cameron, 2003; Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009; Willis et al, 1994), but relates it specifically to choice of friendships and less toward self-view.

It has been argued that an internal support system composed of close relationships with friends and family has an important influence on the ease or difficulty with which transitions are made (Goodman, et al 2006). Culture shock itself is less severe for internationally mobile people with bigger, more varied social networks, particularly when there is at least one close, confiding relationship (Pantelidou and Craig, 2006). It seems natural therefore that supportiveness would be a valued characteristic of the ATCKs friendships.

## 6.5 Critique of this study

It is important to note that the findings from the current study are not necessarily reflective of all ATCKs experience of friendship, but is an interpretation of the current sample's experiences. It is possible that the phenomena described in this study will resonate with other ATCKs, but the aim of IPA research is not to establish a single theory applicable to all. Indeed the participant sample itself may not necessarily be reflective of the wider population of ATCKs, as it was a small number of participants selected from the researchers own network. That is not to say the researcher knew all of the participants, but that colleagues and friends of this researcher nominated the participants. This was not too limiting with regard to the present study as it is beneficial to have a more homogenous sample in IPA research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). However, future research may benefit from the study of different populations, such as young people, other nationalities, or those with a bi-cultural heritage, for example.

Another possible limitation of this study is that time constraints precluded the use of triangulation, which gathers information from multiple perspectives for a more detailed account of the data. This is considered a good method for ensuring validity (Elliott, Fisher and Rennie, 1999) and would likely again be useful to draw upon in future research.

Arguably the greatest limitation of the current research is that it may be too broad. In my attempts to 'bracket' the existing knowledge about TCK and friendship but still answer questions about their friendship and identity the research may lack focus. The result is a less specific account of multiple types of friendship experiences and multiple identities. I could have had greater focus in my research and targeted my interview questions accordingly. My challenge was that there were few studies that addressed the friendship experience of TCKs or ATCKs. I choose a more global study to address multiple issues rather than make assumptions and focus on one issue related to friendship experiences. The benefit of this may be that this study can now be taken further by interested researchers to look at more specific friendships dyads, networks or identities.

While I have tried to ensure homogeneity in the sample by including ATCKs from the UK, there is some room for improvement. For example, I could have included only a female or male sample, or only ATCKs who left the UK before a certain age, as this may have given different data. However, by including a broader homogenous sample I have opened up the applicability of the findings. Perhaps another limitation of this research is that the interview questions required participants to engage with past memories. While our sense of identity is dependent of being able to recall our



personal history there are often errors in recollections (Schlagman, Kliegel, Schulz and Kvavilashvili, 2009). This study could have focused on current or more recent accounts of friendship rather than past experiences to avoid problems with recalling information.

As a consequence of engaging with autobiographical memory identity could be considered through the life-cycle. This makes the findings less specific and more complicated to ground in the literature, as developmental theory could be considered. Childhood is naturally a time of low autonomy and adolescence is a time of identity change and confusion. Normal development could thus account for the findings rather than the friendship experience itself.

IPA is dependent on the participants' ability to describe and articulate their own behaviours and experiences as much as the researcher's ability to questions and interpret them. As an ATCK myself I believe I had the necessary empathy to ask useful questions and make a 'good enough' interpretation of the text (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 81). However, there are times during the interviews where I may not have probed deeply enough because I colluded with the participants belief that I 'knew' what they were talking about. As such I may have missed out on asking for clearer details or alternative explanations and this may have implications for my findings.

With regard to IPA itself, the questions asked in the interview process would not normally be asked. This may prompt one to inquire, what do the answers say about normal everyday situations? Emphasis is on the perception of the phenomena (friendship), but doesn't ask why the participants have these perceptions. Discourse analysis would take a more hard-line socially constructed position towards analysis of the text and consider the societal influences on the ATCKs experience of friendship. This would facilitate discussion of the kinds of experiences (feelings, thoughts, actions) that might be enabled by available discursive constructions and positionings; a way of talking about an issue, such as identity, provides the categories and experience, 'and that language precedes and therefore shapes experiences' (Willig, 2008, p.67). As this research applied a phenomenological analysis it could be argued that the constitutive role of language was not sufficiently addressed.

## **6.6 Recommendations for future research.**

There are a number of future directions this work might prompt. First, I would recommend investigation of further comparison groups, such as from other continents. These comparisons

might provide increased information into the diverse 'third culture' experience, thus differentiating the UK experience from other TCK experiences.

Secondly, I would recommend recruiting participants from a more homogenous background, for example only male or female participants. Comparisons of these groups would further enhance the current literature on ATCKs, thus distinguishing any effects of gender on the experience of friendship for each population of individuals.

Third, I recommend focusing on a certain type of friendship in future studies. For example, close friendships, or friendships between ATCKs and non-ATCKs. It may also be of interest to explore friendship dyads and ask both sides of the dyad to describe their experiences of friendship with one another.

I would also recommend choosing a time frame more carefully for making enquiries about friendship. As mentioned in my critique I feel a limitation of the current study is the large degree of autobiographical memory participants were required to use in reflecting on their experiences of friendship. It may be prudent in light of this criticism to focus inquiry on present friendships or use a younger age sample and focus on childhood friendships.

I believe more research could be conducted to further explore the concept of internalised racism in ATCKs. This concept has traditionally been applied to racial minorities and English people are generally not considered among these. It might be a fascinating topic to further explore and links could possibly be made with the research on marginality for ATCKs.

Any one of the above themes could be singled out as a beginning for further research. For example, the notion of a false self seems to have received little attention in both TCK and wider research. It would be interesting to further study this concept in other TCK or ATCK populations. Or it might be worthwhile developing a study that looks exclusively at the nature of misunderstandings that can occur between TCKs and their non-TCK peers.

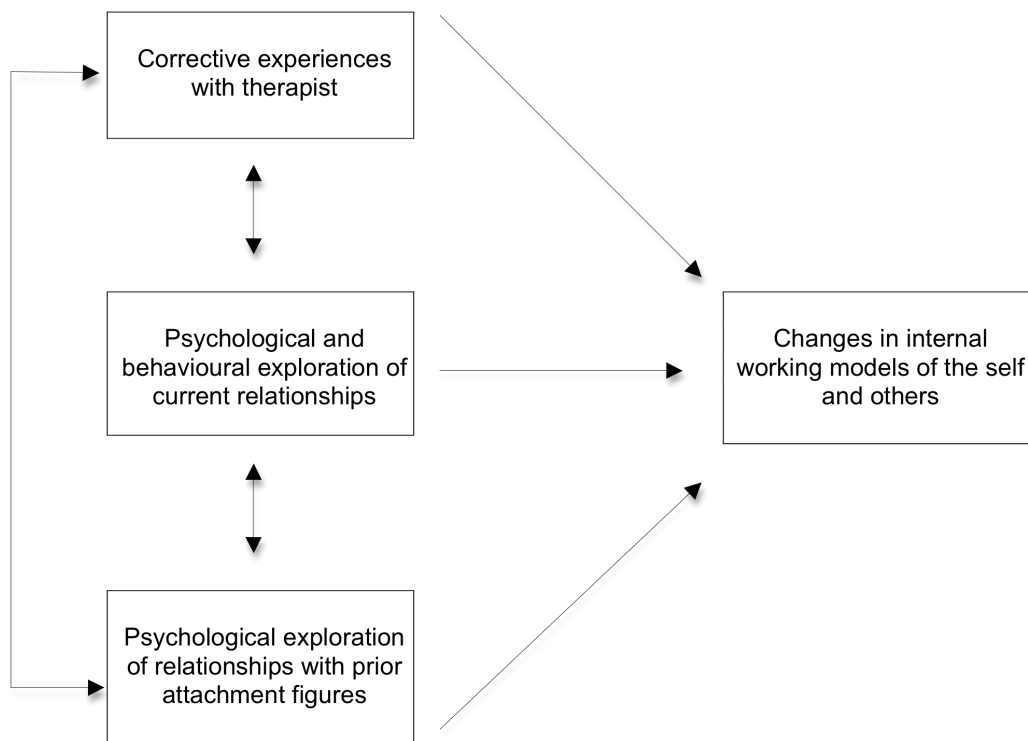
More generally the notion of attachment could be explored in much greater depth with regard to TCKs and their friendships. An attachment questionnaire could be utilised prior to an IPA interview in a mixed method study. This may provide greater details of ATCKs working models and their friendship experiences. It may also be useful to explore this in younger aged TCKs and investigate their family attachments.

## **6.7 Implications for clinical practice.**

Essentially, an understanding of the psychological processes involved in friendship is important to informing clinical practice. The current study goes some way toward outlining several of these processes for ATCKs from the UK. The way in which friendship affects the individual appears to be associated with their cognitive, behavioural approach to friend relationships, which may be informed by their working model of attachment and multiple identities. Clinicians and other professionals can make use of this information when working with TCKs and ATCKs.

Both attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and object relations theory (Winnicott, 1971) could inform therapy with ATCKs, by helping the clinician to bring to the attention of the ATCK their own styles of relating. Patterns of insecure attachment can be related to classical psychoanalytic defence mechanisms, as they are seen as ways of maintaining contact with an object in suboptimal environments (Holmes, 2000). Defences are strategies that an individual employs, either knowingly or unknowingly to avoid facing aspects of the self that are felt to be threatening (Jacobs, 2004). The current research suggests that ATCKs may use distancing to protect themselves from future losses of friend relationships. The primary function of this is to pre-empt further stress and anxiety associated with friend relationships, but also to maintain a consistent, positively valued sense of self, (Kohut, 1971), such as ‘independent’. Drawing attention to the pattern of relating and the associated defences may help a client dismantle those that are no longer helpful (Jacobs, 2004). Where a positively valued sense of self is not maintained, such as with a ‘false’ identity that occurs when the ATCK is ‘faking it to fit in’ with their peers, clinicians may wish to work with the client to explore a more positive sense of self.

The following schematic representation of therapeutic change from Dozier and Tyrrell (1998) may be of use to clinicians working from an attachment perspective with ATCKs.



**Diagram 3:** Dozier and Tyrell's (1998) figure of therapeutic change. Copyright 1998 by The Guilford Press. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher and authors.

Dozier and Tyrell's (1998) model of therapeutic change is based on Bowlby's (1988) secure base hypothesis where three therapeutic processes contribute to the revision of insecure working models of self and others:

**1) The therapist provides a corrective attachment-related experience where the therapist becomes a safe haven and secure base for the client during therapy.** Evidence suggests that clinicians should avoid repeating unhelpful patterns of relating with their clients (Lemma, 2003). Instead the counselling relationship should mirror essential features of an attachment relationship, with the clinician functioning as the 'secure base' from which clients can explore meaningful

personal material (Bowlby, 1988; Holmes, 2010). For ATCKs, this may be any one, or a combination of the themes represented in the ‘challenges of friendship’. Clinicians working with ATCKs may need to be more aware of absences, for example, where the clinician’s absence may function as a reminder of the difficulties of keeping in touch with others. Clinicians should also keep in mind that ending therapy might be difficult for the ATCK, as therapy may have filled a significant gap in their lives. Additionally, the clinician should be aware of a collaborative approach where the lack of autonomy experienced by ATCKs in their peer relationships is not repeated in the therapeutic relationship, or if it is, this is used helpfully in the here-and-now. Clinicians should also be mindful that while a TCK/ATCK may look ‘English’, or hold a British passport, or even have lived in the UK for a length of time, the TCK/ATCK may not actually feel ‘English’, or know very much about English culture. This will include language, pop culture references and social norms that may arise during sessions.

**2) The client’s exploration of and reflection on current relationships, including the relationship with the therapist.** With regard to exploring the ATCK’s current relationships, it may be that the ATCK shows evidence of insecure attachment or repeats the pattern of relating shown above in diagram 2. A discussion of this style may enable the ATCK to grieve previous losses, or to let go of unhelpful patterns of relating.

With regard to exploring the client/therapist relationship, the countertransference (conscious and preconscious feelings the clinicians have towards their client, Carpy, 1989) may be a useful tool for helping ATCK clients to understand their patterns of relating and work towards resolving areas of conflict. If, for example, an English clinician is working with an ATCK they may notice negative feelings towards English people, or anger towards the client. Armed with enough ‘self knowledge and capacity for objectivity to examine their own reactions’ (Malan, 2001, p. 131), a clinician could reduce the manifestations of countertransference (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988) and help the client towards greater understanding and less conflict in their relationships with English people. Internalized racism could be explored through reflective writing, which addresses the difficulty by (1) externalising the problem; (2) allowing the individual to re-author their own story; (3) providing expressive space for working through emotions; and (4) facilitating the dialogical interaction between the multiple and conflicted aspects of the self (Kaufka, 2009).

Clinicians may also be able to help clients explore the societal norms and normalise their experiences as they readjust and reintegrate with the general cultural milieu of a country from which they have been absent for a number of years, or indeed may never have lived in. This may be

particularly relevant with those who present with very negative views of “Englishness” as they may not be aware of them, or how they affect self and/or others.

**3) The client’s exploration and reflection on earlier relationships with attachment figures.** It may be useful for the therapist to explore previous losses of friend relationships within therapy. However, it may also be useful for clinicians to explore attachment relationships with primary caregivers who were unable to provide a secure base due to their own stresses during life transitions. This study cannot predict whether insecurity arose prior to the friend relationships, but as research suggests early attachment models are affected by life transitions (Bar-Haim et al (2000), early caregiver relationships may be useful to explore as they may also have an impact on how the TCK/ATCK interacts in friend relationships. Given that autonomy was also reported to be a challenge to friendships in earlier life, family therapy could be considered when a TCK presents with difficulties in peer relationships.

For clinicians not using a psychodynamic formulation, based on working models of attachment, for example those informed by CBT may wish to use anxiety as a central organising feature when working with ATCKs. This will align more closely with the cognitive behavioural theories of friendship and the associated evidence from the current study. As such they may help the client to work with their beliefs that friends will be lost to them and/or they must distance themselves from others or ‘fake’ an identity to maintain some friendships. Clinicians may wish to work toward helping clients think about friendships as less threatening or about their ability to cope with loss without using distancing, or a negative view of self or others, as a defence.

Alternatively clients may wish to explore their own sense of self within therapy. Gaw (2007) suggests that identity is a key assessment dimension for counselling TCKs or ATCKs “because much of what brings [them] into counselling is related to the difficult question, ‘who am I?’ (Gaw, 2007, p. 65). From the social constructionist perspective taken in this study identities are responsive to context, are culturally dependent, and are always local. A clinician may wish to help their client consider the contextual and cultural variables that inform their identities and how their friendships have shaped this through the years. The therapist may comment on cultural variables between context, for example an individualist culture from a western context and a collectivist culture from an Asian/Oriental culture. Alternatively, the therapist can facilitate a discussion of the useful ways ATCKs avoided loneliness by adapting their sense of self to align with a peer group. In this way the focus is shifted from a negative sense of self, as may be associated with ‘faking it to fit in’ to being a ‘cultural chameleon’ where self was is achieved by adopting the cultures, mannerisms, and

languages of their environment so as to blend in (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 92). This can be considered a valuable skill that makes it easier for non-TCKs in the dominant culture to relate to the TCK and for TCKs to function with greater ease in that culture. Perhaps even the notion of being a ‘friendship chameleon’, as adaptive and useful, could be introduced.

The main contribution of the current research for counselling psychology is the development of empathic understanding for the participants and their situation from reading about the multiple challenges the participants encountered both interpersonally and intrapersonally. Any number of the challenges identified in the current research could be topics for discussion between the client and clinician. Armed with this knowledge clinicians may be better facilitated to deal with any of the challenges ATCKs face in their friend relationships.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The current research study was an IPA study with the goal of describing the friendship experiences of ATCKs from the UK. The significance of this study is that more people than ever are travelling abroad with their families and experience challenges with interpersonal relationships and their identities. The major findings suggest that forming and maintaining friendships with others is a challenge for ATCKs from the UK and that their sense of self and other is greatly affected by their friendships.

To a large degree human relationships are based upon reciprocity, mutual disclosure and seeking out people who can confirm and validate ones identity. For ATCKs these things seem complex, challenging and interconnected. As such both friendship and identity were considered to be inter-related and necessary to study together. Factors related to the process and maintenance of friendship result in a variety of identities for ATCKs from the UK, and the ATCK identity affects the process and maintenance of friendship. The findings from this study can be a starting point for clinicians, and others who are interested in this field, to find out more about TCKs and ATCKs from the UK, and also discover ways to help those who present in clinical practice with difficulties with interpersonal relationships and/or their identity.

The major implication of this work is that there is still much to be learned about the friendship experiences of TCKs and ATCKs. The scarcity of research in this area leads to the conclusion that friendship has been overlooked or underestimated and not typically seen as important in navigating the internationally mobile lifestyles many of us lead. The findings from the current research suggest

otherwise and illustrate the multiple challenges that ATCKs experience in their interpersonal relationships, not least because it affects their identities but because it also affects their attachments to others. These challenges pose an interesting question- can ATCKs form friendships with others? The answer seems to be yes, but not without some re-organisation of their identity and significant anxiety. This has consequences for their support networks and sense of self, and more TCKs and ATCKs may well turn up in clinical settings.



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## APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROGRAMME INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

**Please read the Notes for Guidance before completing this form.** If necessary, please continue your answers on a separate sheet of paper: indicate clearly which question the continuation sheet relates to and ensure that it is securely fastened to the report form.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Title of the programme:</b> Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology  <b>Title of research project (if different from above):</b> Constructions of social relationships among ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ living in the UK.		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Name of person responsible for the programme (Principal Investigator):</b> Felicity Jane (Jay) McClellan  <b>Status:</b> Student  <b>Name of supervisor (if different from above):</b> Professor Rachel Tribe  <b>Status:</b> Professor of Counselling Psychology		
<b>3.</b>	<b>School:</b>	Psychology	<b>Department/Unit:</b> Counselling Psychology
<b>4.</b>	<b>Level of the programme (delete as Appropriate):</b>  Postgraduate (Professional Doctorate)		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Number of:</b>  <b>(a) Researchers (approximately):</b> ONE (1)  <b>(b) Participants (approximately):</b> TEN (10)		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Name of researcher(s) (including title):</b> Ms. Felicity Jane (Jay) McClellan  <b>Nature of researcher (delete as appropriate):</b> Student  <b>If “others” please give full details:</b> N/A		

7.	<b>Nature of participants (general characteristics, e.g. University students, primary school children, etc):</b> Adult UK Passport holders who spent one year, or more, between age 0 -19 years, living in a country other than the UK for reason of their parents employment.
8.	<b>Probable duration of the research:</b>  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span><b>from (starting date):</b> June 2010</span> <span><b>to (finishing date):</b> June 2012</span> </div>
9.	<b>Aims of the research including any hypothesis to be tested:</b>  <p>This research aims to explore the ways in which ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK understand and experience their social relationships with people from the UK who did not spend time growing up overseas. For the purpose of this study, a Third Culture Kid is <i>"...a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture."</i> (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001. p 19). An ‘Adult Third Culture Kid’ is a person who spent a portion of their developmental years overseas but is now over the age of 19 years.</p> <p>Research suggests that ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ face various rewards and challenges when forming social relationships. For example, research suggests that ‘Third Culture Kids’ struggle to transact the developmental tasks necessary for identity formation and sometimes fail to form lasting relationships. Some research also points to ‘Third Culture Kids’ possessing a sense of rootlessness or feeling marginalised within social relationships. Other research maintains that ‘Third Culture Kids’ are a privileged group with an advantage when compared with their peers who spent all of their developmental years in their passport country. However, this research has failed to examine the accounts ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ give of their social relationships and is largely quantitative or anecdotal. It is also based on adolescent populations or participants living in the USA. Research that has attempted a qualitative methodology with a UK population does not examine the influence of language in forming and negotiating social relationships and it does not consider the wider societal dialogues available to ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ in constructing social relationships. In addition there are no studies conducted by Psychologists in this field, despite frequent mentions of emotional distress or personal success.</p> <p>The social constructionist approach utilised in this research suggests that language not only constructs a person’s view of the world, but also that the worldview influences the language available to them. The purpose of this study is to address some of the gaps in the literature by focusing on the social relationships of ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ within a UK population. The data collection and analysis should yield a rich explanation of how ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ construct and negotiate their social relationships. The objective is to develop knowledge about, and the resources available to this group.</p>

**10. Description of the procedures to be used (give sufficient detail for the Committee to be clear about what is involved in the research). Please append to the application form copies of any instructional leaflets, letters, questionnaires, forms or other documents which will be issued to the participants:**

Participants will be ten 'Adult Third Culture Kids' currently residing in the UK. Participants must have spent one year or more of their developmental years (0-19 years) living in a country other than their passport country (the UK). They must have been resident in the UK for a minimum of six months prior to the interview so they will have formed some peer relationships with non-'Adult Third Culture Kids' from the UK.

It is proposed that recruitment will be done through an internet Facebook group. The researcher has set up a private account on Facebook with no personal details showing and has joined several 'Third Culture Kids' groups using this webpage. If insufficient participants are recruited through this method, subsequent snowballing may be utilised. A notice will be posted on the group WebPages asking for volunteers (see Appendix 1). Should any 'Adult Third Culture Kids' wish to take part, they will be sent a letter detailing how they can participate, the outline of the study, their right to withdraw, and how their confidentiality will be protected (see Appendix 2).

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher will explain the interview structure and obtain written consent from the participant (see Appendix 3)

The interview will be semi-structured. The questions posed to the participants will be based on the literature, with the purpose of eliciting information based on the participant's own experiences. The interview will begin with a brief orientation to the topic and discussion of the terms used (see appendix 4). The participants will be asked between five to six questions and the researcher will use prompts if needed (see appendix 5). A pilot study will be conducted prior to the actual interviews. The results of the pilot interview may alter the frame of the interview questions slightly, but no other changes will be made. It is proposed that each interview will last for approximately sixty minutes, with the aim of giving participants sufficient time to articulate their experiences of social relationships as much as possible. Interviews will be recorded using a password-protected MP3 recorder.

Following the interviews, participants will be debriefed and given a list of available resources (see Appendix 6).

Participants will be given a pseudonym to protect their anonymity. Personal details collected will include name, age and address. These details will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researchers place of residence. Digital recordings of the interview will be kept on a password-protected MP3 recorder. Transcripts made from the recordings will be kept in an encrypted file on a password-protected personal computer. The computer is not networked, and cannot be accessed by others. The data collection will comply with the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. This research will also conform to the ethical guidelines outlined by British Psychological Society. All data will be kept for a period of ten years in accordance with the UEL guidelines following completion of the research project and destroyed thereafter. Participants will be given a summary of the findings if they request a copy.

<b>11.</b>	<b>Are there potential hazards to the participant(s) in these procedures?</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>If yes: (a) what is the nature of the hazard(s)?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	<b>(b) what precautions will be taken?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Is medical care or after care necessary?</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>If yes, what provision has been made for this?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>May these procedures cause discomfort or distress?</b>	<b>YES</b>
	<b>If yes, give details including likely duration:</b>	
	<p>No distress or discomfort is anticipated. However, participants may experience distress if they describe difficult experiences associated with their relationships. Debriefing literature will include contact details of where participants may find support – For example, websites, Peer groups, and reading materials (see appendix 6).</p> <p>A summary of the findings can be made available to the participants to increase their understanding of the research and minimise any possible distress.</p>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>(a) Will there be administration of drugs (including alcohol)?</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>If yes, give details: N/A</b>	
	<b>(b) Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress, please state what previous experience you have had in conducting this type of research: N/A<sup>98</sup></b>	

**15. (a) How will the participants' consent be obtained?**

Participants will be required to give verbal and written consent before the interviews take place. It will be outlined that they can withdraw at any time (see appendix 3). The Researcher will ensure the confidentiality of personal information relating to the participants as outlined above. The research will comply with the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines for conducting research. All data will be kept for a period of ten years and destroyed thereafter according to UEL guidelines for good research.

**(b) What will the participants be told as to the nature of the research?**

Participants will be told the research aims to explore how 'Adult Third Culture Kids' form and develop social relationships with non-'Adult Third Culture Kids' in the UK. They will be informed that the literature on this subject is minimal and largely quantitative. The literature that is qualitative fails to consider the language utilised by, and available to, 'Adult Third Culture Kids'. They will be told that the objective of the study is to expand knowledge about 'Adult Third Culture Kids' in a variety of ways, but that, as the research is qualitative, it is not possible to predict the outcomes. They will be informed that they can request a summary of the findings.

**16. (a) Will the participants be paid?**

NO- travel expenses may be reimbursed.

**(b) If yes, please give the amount:**

N/A

**(c) If yes, please give full details of the reason for the payment and how the amount given in 16 (b) above has been calculated (i.e. what expenses and time lost is it intended to cover):** N/A**17. Are the services of the University Health Service likely to be required during or after the research?****NO**

If yes, give details: N/A

**18. (a) Where will the research take place?**

The interviews will take place at the Participants university or place of business or in a UEL interview room. The researcher will provide a timetable of where and when the interviews will take place and give this to the research supervisor and a colleague. The researcher will also nominate a person to contact at the end of each interview. If the researcher should fail to contact the nominated person, that person will then alert others, including the research Supervisor.

**(b) What equipment (if any) will be used?**

A small handheld digital recorder will be used

**(c) If equipment is being used is there any risk of accident or injury? NO**

**If yes, what precautions are being taken to ensure that should any untoward event happen adequate aid can be given: N/A**



**3. DECLARATION**

**I undertake to abide by accepted ethical principles and appropriate code(s) of practice in carrying out this programme.**

**Personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and not passed on to others without the written consent of the subject.**

**The nature of the investigation and any possible risks will be fully explained to intending participants, and they will be informed that:**

- (a) they are in no way obliged to volunteer if there is any personal reason (which they are under no obligation to divulge) why they should not participate in the programme; and**
- (b) they may withdraw from the programme at any time, without disadvantage to themselves and without being obliged to give any reason.**

**NAME OF APPLICANT:  
(Person responsible)**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Felicity 'Jay' McClellan**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF DEAN OF SCHOOL:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 1: Recruitment Notice

**Calling all ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ living in the UK! I would like to talk to you and find out about your friendships with others.**

The interview, which is part of my Doctoral research at The University of East London, will take about 60 minutes. I am willing to travel to your place of work or study if you can provide an interview room. If not, one can be found at the University of East London in Stratford (your travel expenses can be reimbursed). The interview will be completely confidential and your anonymity will be protected. Should you wish to, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Your participation is greatly appreciated, as it will help develop knowledge about ‘Third Culture Kids’ and ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK.

Please contact me directly if you need any further information, I am very willing to answer any questions you have.

Thank you for your consideration.

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist – University of East London

Phone number: 0791 222 4067

Email: [fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

**Appendix 1                      Research Ethics Committee Proposal Form.**

Appendix 2: Letter to participant

F. Jay McClellan  
c/o School of Psychology  
The University of East London  
Stratford Campus  
Water Lane  
London  
E15 4LZ

0791 222 4067  
[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

Dear .....

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Your participation in this research project is valuable, as you have spent more than 1 year of your developmental years (0-19 years) growing up in a country other than the UK.

This research aims to explore your experiences of forming, developing and maintaining friendships with others. How you talk about your experiences will help develop knowledge and inform theory about 'Third Culture Kids' from the UK.

To discover your perspective, face-to-face interviews will be used which should take about 60 minutes.

Your participation will be greatly valued. In accordance to the UEL code of ethics, your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times and you have the right to withdraw at any time.

If you would like to take part in this study, I would be very grateful if you could contact me at the above email address. If you would like to ask any questions or require any further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards

---

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist- University of East London

Appendix 3: Consent form**Introduction**

You are being invited to participate in a Doctoral research study with the working title: The experience of friendship for Adult Third Culture Kids from the UK.

F. Jay McClellan is conducting this study under the supervision of Professor Rachel Tribe at the School of Psychology at the University of East London.

**Volunteer status and confidentiality**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidentiality is assured in all published and written data resulting from the study. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. You may elect to withdraw from this study at any time and the information we have collected from you will be destroyed. If you decide to participate the information you provide will be used only for the completion of this study and destroyed after completion of this study. All data collected will comply with the Data Protection act of 1998 and is kept in accordance with UEL and the British Psychological Society guidelines for ethical practice.

**Purpose**

This research aims to explore the ways in which 'Adult Third Culture Kids' understand and experience their social relationships with others, particularly when they returned to the UK.

**Procedure**

Face to face, semi-structured interviews will take place. The researcher will first introduce the research subject to help orientate you to the research topic. The researcher will then ask you a question about your friendships and will use a number of prompts to help you think about and answer the question. When you have answered the questions as much as you feel able, the interview will end and there will be time for a discussion with the researcher. The interview will be recorded using a digital recorder. Following the interviews the researcher will transcribe the interviews verbatim and use these transcripts in the analysis. Your confidentiality will be kept at all times and you may choose not to answer any question. You also have to the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times.

**Time Commitment**

Your participation in this study will take approximately 60 minutes.

**Risks**

Taking part in this study may bring up some thoughts and feelings surrounding difficult experiences you may have had with your friendships. However, a number of resources are available to you on the debriefing form.

**Benefits**

There is likely no direct benefit to you for participating in this study but it will help us and others to understand some of the issues facing 'Adult Third Culture Kids' in forming and developing social relationships. It may also help develop theory and resources for professionals working with this client group.

**Payment**

You will not be paid for participating in this study. Your travel expenses can be reimbursed upon providing a receipt.

## **Appendix 1                      Research Ethics Committee Proposal Form.**

### **Appendix 3: Consent form**

#### **Ethical clearance**

This study has received ethical clearance from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of East London. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times, according to the Data Protection Act of 1998, UEL ethical guidelines for conducting research and the British Psychological Society code of ethics. Some of the data in this study may be used for a published study. You may request a summary of the findings from this project.

#### **For further information**

Any questions that you may have about this study can be answered by:

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist- University of East London

0791 222 4067

[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

#### **Before You Sign This Document**

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in a research study. Please be sure that any questions have been answered to your satisfaction and that you have a thorough understanding of the study. If you have further questions that come up later, please feel free to ask the researcher. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

**Participant's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 4: Terms used.

**Adult Third Culture Kid-** An ‘Adult Third Culture Kid’ is a person who spent a portion of their developmental (between 0-19 years of age) years overseas but is now over the age of 19 years.

**Third Culture Kid-** A person (between the age of 0-19 years of age) who has spent a significant part of their developmental years (between the age of 0-19 years of age) outside the parents' culture.

**Non-Third Culture Kid –** A person who spent all of their developmental years residing in their parent’s culture.

**Parent’s culture/passport country-** The UK.

**Examples of questions for semi-structured interviews.**

1. Can you tell me how would you define your friendships with people from the UK who did not grow up overseas?
2. How have you made friends with people from the UK who did not grow up overseas?
3. Have you noticed any differences between how you have made friends with people who grew up abroad and how you made friends with those who grew up in the UK?
4. What has influenced your friendships with people from the UK who did not grow up overseas?
5. How are your friendships with people from the UK who did not grow up overseas different or the same from your friendships with people who did grow up overseas?
6. Do you think your friends from the UK view you any differently from people who did not grow up abroad?

**Prompts**

Could you say more about that?

Can you give me an example of that?

What makes you think that?

What is your experience of that?

Appendix 6: Debrief Form

**Purpose of research** -This research aims to explore the ways in which ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK understand and experience their social relationships with people from the UK who did not spend time growing up overseas. Research suggests that ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ face various rewards and challenges when forming social relationships with their peers who did not grow up overseas. Other research maintains that ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ are a privileged group with an advantage when compared with their peers who did not grow up overseas. However, this research has failed to examine the accounts ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ give of their relationships and is largely quantitative or anecdotal. This research has also fallen short of studying ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ living in the UK. The research that has attempted a qualitative methodology does not examine the influence of language in forming and negotiating relationships and it does not consider the wider societal dialogues available to ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ in constructing relationships. The purpose of this study is to address some of the gaps in the literature and increase the knowledge available, by focusing on the language ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ use to understand their social relationships within a UK population.

**Procedure** - The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews have now concluded. The researcher first introduced the research topic and some definitions to help orientate you to the research topic. The researcher then asked you five or six questions and used a number of prompts to help you think about and answer the questions. When you answered the questions as much as you felt able, the interview ended and there was time for a discussion with the researcher. The interview was recorded and the researcher will now transcribed the interviews verbatim and use these transcripts as part of the analysis. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be kept at all times and you have to the right to withdraw from the research at any time. You can request a summary of the findings from this project if you are interested.

If you were upset or distressed by participation in this study, or found out information about yourself that is upsetting or distressing, you are encouraged to make contact with one of the following agencies:

**Counselling Resources.**

Your GP may be able to provide services.

<http://www.samaritans.org/> or tel: 0845 909090

<http://www.bacp.co.uk/>

**TCK resources.**

<http://www.tckworld.com/>

<http://www.expertexpert.com/home#>

<http://www.gng.org/>

In the event you would like to read more about ‘Third Culture Kids’ and related topics, below are several articles that you may find interesting.

Pollock, D.C., Van Reken, R.E. (1999). *The Third Culture Kid Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Pollock, D.C., Van Reken, R.E. (2001). *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*. London: Nicholas Brealey/Intercultural Press.

Curnow McCluskey, K. (1994). *Notes from a Travelling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents & Children*. Washington: Foreign Services Youth Foundation

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you are encouraged to call:

F. Jay McClellan. 0791 222 4067. [fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

Thank you kindly for your participation.



**Appendix 2 Research Ethics Committee Approval letter.**



Rachel Tribe  
Psychology School, Stratford

ETH/12/31

20 September 2012

Dear Rachel,

**Application to the Research Ethics Committee: Constructions of social relationships among 'Adult Third Culture Kids' living in the UK. ( F Jane ).**

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the above application on the terms previously advised to you. The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simiso Jubane', is located below the 'Yours sincerely' text.

Simiso Jubane  
Admission and Ethics Officer  
s.jubane@uel.ac.uk  
02082232976

---

**Research Ethics Committee: ETH/12/31**

I hereby agree to inform the Research Ethics Committee of any changes to be made to the above approved programme and any adverse incidents that arise during the conduct of the programme.

Signed:.....Date: .....

Please Print Name:

**Appendix 3 Email requesting Research Ethics Committee consideration of changes to the research proposal.**

**3/06/10**

Dear Simiso,  
**Re: ETH/12/31**

I am following through with the requirement that the researcher inform the ethics committee if any changes are made to the research once approval has been granted. I am changing my methodology from Discourse Analysis to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Please could you clarify if I can continue?

With thanks.  
F. J. McClellan.

**7/2/10**

**Ref: ETH 12/31**

Dear Jay,

With regards to the above ethics application, please see the response of the committee:

· Sorry do not understand the differences – explanation in lay terms required please.

Please can you respond to the above issues.

Regards  
**Simiso Jubane**  
Admissions and Ethics Officer  
The Graduate School  
University of East London  
4-6 University Way  
London E16 2R

**7/2/10**

Dear Simiso,

Thank you.

I am changing the way I will analyse the data I gather from the interviews I will conduct in my research. Data was going to be analysed using Discourse analysis and will now be analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. These are both well recognised qualitative methods of data analysis, but differ slightly in the epistemological position they take. Discourse analysis is social constructionist, whereas IPA is symbolic interactionist.

Please let me know if you require further clarification.

With thanks,  
Jay McClellan.

**Appendix 4 Letter from Research Ethics Committee confirming approval of changes to the research proposal.**



Professor Rachel Tribe  
Psychology School  
Stratford

ETH/12/31

20 September 2012

Dear Rachel,

**Application to the Research Ethics Committee: Constructions of social relationships among 'Adult Third Culture Kids' living in the UK. (F McClellan)**

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the amendments to the previously approved application. The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Dada', is written over a horizontal line.

Debbie Dada  
Admissions and Ethics Officer  
Direct Line: 0208 223 2976  
Email: d.dada@uel.ac.uk

---

**Research Ethics Committee: ETH/12/31**

I hereby agree to inform the Research Ethics Committee of any changes to be made to the above approved programme and any adverse incidents that arise during the conduct of the programme.

Signed:.....Date: .....

Please Print Name:

## **Appendix 5 Email notifying Research Ethics Committee of changes to Interview Method**

Dear Debbie,

**Re: ETH/12/31**

**Student No. u0636747**

**Felicity J. McClellan**

**Doctorate of Counselling Psychology**

**TITLE- Constructions of friendship among Adult Third Culture Kids from the UK.**

I would like to add an addendum to my Ethics proposal. I wish to interview participants via SKYPE. The proposed method was 1-2-1 interviews in person. As some of my volunteer participants reside a considerable distance away I would like to interview over SKYPE in order to recruit the required numbers for my study. Please could I confirm that this will be acceptable to the Ethics committee.

Please find attached the original ethics proposal and letter of acceptance.

Thank you for your assistance.

Best wishes,  
F. J. McClellan

## **Appendix 6 Email from Research Ethics Committee confirming approval of changes to Interview Method**

Dear Felicity,

Thank you for your email. Please take this as confirmation from the School of Psychology Ethics Subcommittee that the addendum to your ethics application to conduct some interviews via Skype is approved. The procedure poses no significant change to the ethical procedure of your research.

Best Wishes,

Mark

Dr Mark Finn  
School of Psychology  
University of East London  
Water Lane  
London E15 4NO

Rm AE2.19  
[m.finn@uel.ac.uk](mailto:m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 7     Participant recruitment notice on Facebook.**

**Calling all ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ living in the UK! I would like to talk to you and find out about your social relationships with others.**

An ‘Adult Third Culture Kid’ is a person who spent a portion of their developmental (between 0-19 years of age) years ‘growing up’ overseas but is now over the age of 19 years.

The interview, which is part of my Doctoral research at The University of East London, will take about 60 minutes. I am willing to travel to your place of work or study if you can provide an interview room. If not, one can be found at the University of East London in Stratford (your travel expenses can be reimbursed). The interview will be completely confidential and your anonymity will be protected. Should you wish to, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Your participation is greatly appreciated, as it will help develop knowledge about ‘Third Culture Kids’ and ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK.

Please contact me directly if you need any further information, I am very willing to answer any questions you have.

Thank you for your consideration.

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist – University of East London

Phone number: 0791 222 4067

Email: [fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

## Appendix 8 Participant recruitment letter via email.

F. Jay McClellan  
c/o School of Psychology  
The University of East London  
Stratford Campus  
Water Lane  
London  
E15 4LZ

0791 222 4067  
[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

Dear NAME

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Your participation in this research project is valuable, as you are an Adult Third Culture Kid from the UK. This means that:

- You are from the UK (both, or one, of your parents hold a British passport, as do you.)
- Your parents moved abroad for work purposes (not for immigration) when you were between 0-19 years.
- You resided overseas for more than one year during your developmental years (ages 0-19 years).
- You have some memories of the time you spent overseas.
- You returned to the UK for study/work (your parents may have stayed overseas or returned with you).
- You are now over the age of 19 years.

This research aims to explore your experiences of forming, developing and maintaining friendships with others, especially after you returned to the UK. How you talk about your experiences will help develop knowledge and inform theory about 'Third Culture Kids' from the UK.

To discover your perspective, face-to-face interviews will be held. I will ask you about your friendship experiences and prompt you for details as we discuss your perspective. Interviews should take about 60 minutes.

In accordance with the UEL code of ethics, your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times and you have the right to withdraw at any time.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you would like to ask any questions or require any further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

---

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist- University of East London

Supervisor: Professor R. Tribe. [r.tribe@uel.ac.uk](mailto:r.tribe@uel.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 9 Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form**

### **Introduction**

You have been asked to participate in a Doctoral research study with the working title: The experience of friendship for Adult Third Culture Kids from the UK.

F. Jay McClellan is conducting this study under the supervision of Professor Rachel Tribe at the School of Psychology at the University of East London.

### **Volunteer status and confidentiality**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidentiality is assured in all published and written data resulting from the study. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. You may elect to withdraw from this study at any time and the information we have collected from you will be destroyed. If you decide to participate the information you provide will be used only for the completion of this study and destroyed after completion of this study. All data collected will comply with the Data Protection act of 1998 and is kept in accordance with UEL and the British Psychological Society guidelines for ethical practice.

### **Purpose**

This research aims to explore the ways in which ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ understand and experience their friend relationships with others.

### **Procedure**

Face to face, semi-structured interviews will take place. The researcher will first introduce the research subject to help orientate you to the research topic. The researcher will then ask you a question about your friendships and will use a number of prompts to help you think about and answer the question. When you have answered the questions as much as you feel able, the interview will end and there will be time for a discussion with the researcher. *The interview will be recorded using a digital recorder.* Following the interviews the researcher will transcribe the interviews verbatim and use these transcripts in the analysis. Your confidentiality will be kept at all times and you may choose not to answer any question. You also have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times.

### **Time Commitment**

Your participation in this study will take approximately 60 minutes.

### **Risks**

Taking part in this study may bring up some thoughts and feelings surrounding difficult experiences you may have had with your friendships. However, a number of resources are available to you on the debriefing form.

### **Benefits**

There is likely no direct benefit to you for participating in this study but it will help us and others to understand some of the issues facing ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ in forming and developing social relationships. It may also help develop theory and resources for professionals working with this client group.

### **Payment**

You will not be paid for participating in this study. Your travel expenses can be reimbursed upon providing a receipt.

### **Ethical clearance**



## **Appendix 9 Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form**

This study has received ethical clearance from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of East London. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times, according to the Data Protection Act of 1998, UEL ethical guidelines for conducting research and the British Psychological Society code of ethics. Some of the data in this study may be used for a published study. You may request a summary of the findings from this project.

### **For further information**

Any questions that you may have about this study can be answered by:

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist- University of East London

0791 222 4067

[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

### **Before You Sign This Document**

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in a research study. Please be sure that any questions have been answered to your satisfaction and that you have a thorough understanding of the study. If you have further questions that come up later, please feel free to ask the researcher. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

**Participant's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 10 Participant debriefing form**

### **Debriefing Form**

**Purpose of research** -This research aims to explore the ways in which ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK understand and experience their friendships. Research suggests that ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ face various rewards and challenges when forming social relationship and this has implications for their identity and well being. However, much of this research is quantitative or anecdotal and has failed to examine the accounts ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ give of their friendships. The research has also fallen short of studying ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’ from the UK. The purpose of this study is to address some of the gaps in the literature and increase the knowledge available to people working with “Third Culture Kids’ and ‘Adult Third Culture Kids’.

**Procedure** - The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews have now concluded. The researcher first introduced the research topic and some definitions to help orientate you to the research topic. The researcher then asked you three questions and used a number of prompts to help you think about and answer the questions. When you answered the questions as much as you felt able, the interview ended and there was time for a discussion with the researcher. The interview was recorded and the researcher will now transcribed the interviews verbatim and use these transcripts as part of the analysis. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be kept at all times and you have to the right to withdraw from the research at any time. You can request a summary of the findings from this project if you are interested.

If you were upset or distressed by participation in this study, or found out information about yourself that is upsetting or distressing, you are encouraged to make contact with one of the following agencies:

## **Appendix 10 Participant debriefing form**

### **Counselling Resources.**

Your GP may be able to provide services.

<http://www.samaritans.org/> or tel: 0845 909090

<http://www.bps.org.uk/>

<http://www.bacp.co.uk/>

### **TCK resources.**

<http://www.tckworld.com/>

<http://www.expertexpert.com/home#>

<http://www.gng.org/>

In the event you would like to read more about ‘Third Culture Kids’ and related topics, below are several articles that you may find interesting.

Pollock, D.C., Van Reken, R.E. (1999). *The Third Culture Kid Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Pollock, D.C., Van Reken, R.E. (2001). *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*. London: Nicholas Brealey/Intercultural Press.

Curnow McCluskey, K. (1994). *Notes from a Travelling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents & Children*. Washington: Foreign Services Youth Foundation

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you are encouraged to call:

F. Jay McClellan. 0791 222 4067.

[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

### **Thank you kindly for your participation.**

F. Jay McClellan

Trainee Counselling Psychologist- University of East London

0791 222 4067

[fjmcclellan@gmail.com](mailto:fjmcclellan@gmail.com)

## **Appendix 11 Participant Information email**

Dear participant,

Just confirming tomorrow at *TIME*. Are you still OK to meet?

In advance of our meeting could I please ask you to think about your experiences of friendship?

During our interview I will ask you a variety of questions concerning your friendship experiences while you were living overseas as a TCK, when you returned to the UK and if you think being a TCK has influenced your friendships. Any stories and associations you can recall will be greatly received.

Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Best wishes,  
Jay.

## **Appendix 12 Initial semi-structured interview schedule**

### **Final Interview Guide.**

As the interviews are semi structured, the following questions are a guide to the areas to be covered during the interview. The way in which the interview unfolds will be influenced by the participants responses.

*-I may not speak very much, this is not because I am not interested in what you have to say, but because I am more interested in what you have to say.*

#### **Questions to build rapport.**

Have you had any trouble getting here?

What would you normally be doing if you were not doing this interview?

#### **Question 1:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of their friendships with other TCKs.**

In your own words, please could you tell me about your experience of friendship.

- What kinds of people were you friends with?
- How did you make friends with people?
  - Could tell me about a specific friendship with someone from overseas?
  - How do you feel, think about this friendship?
- What is the best thing about your friendships with people you spent time with overseas?
- What is the worst things about your friendship with people you spent time with overseas?
- Have you maintained these friendships?
  - How?

#### **Question 2:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of friendship with non-TCKs.**

Please could you tell me about your experience of friendship when you returned to the UK?

- What kinds of people are you friends with?
- How did you make friends with people?
  - Could tell me about a specific friendship with someone from the UK?
  - How do you feel, think about this friendship?
- What is the best thing about your friendships in the UK?
- What is the worst things about your friendship in the UK?
- Have you maintained these friendships?
  - How?

## **Appendix 12 Initial semi-structured interview schedule**

### **Question 3:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of their identity in friendships.**

Do you think your experiences as a person raised overseas have influenced your friendships?

- How do you think other people experience you?
- How would you describe yourself in relation to your friends?
  - What words or images come up for you when you think about being raised overseas.
- How might your friends describe you?
  - What words or images have others used to describe you?

END:

Is there anything I didn't ask you about that you feel is particularly relevant to your experience of friendship?

### **Prompts.**

- \* Whatever you feel is significant.
- \* Whatever seems most relevant.
- \* Whichever you would like to start with.
- \* Could you say more about that?
- \* Could you please give me an example of that?
- \* How did that make you feel?
- \* What makes you think that?
- \* What made you feel that way?
- \* What do you mean by X?
- \* How have you experienced X?

### **Debriefing:**

Thank you.

How do you feel about our conversation?

Is there anything that bothered you about our conversation?

Is there anything you would like me to omit from the interview when I transcribe it?

Do you have any questions for me?

*Go through the debriefing sheet.*

## Appendix 13- Final Semi-structured Interview Schedule

### **Final Interview Guide.**

As the interviews are semi structured, the following questions are a guide to the areas to be covered during the interview. The way in which the interview unfolds will be influenced by the participants responses.

*-I may not speak very much, this is not because I am not interested in what you have to say, but because I am more interested in what you have to say.*

#### **Questions to build rapport.**

Have you had any trouble getting here?

What would you normally be doing if you were not doing this interview?

#### **Question 1:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of their friendships with other TCKs.**

In your own words, please could you tell me about your experience of friendship when you were overseas.

- What kinds of people were you friends with?
- How did you make friends with people?
  - Could tell me about a specific friendship with someone from overseas?
  - How do you feel, think about this friendship?
- What is the best thing about your friendships with people you spent time with overseas?
- What is the worst things about your friendship with people you spent time with overseas?
- Have you maintained these friendships?
  - How?

#### **Question 2:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of friendship with non-TCKs.**

Please could you tell me about your experience of friendship when you returned to the UK?

- What kinds of people are you friends with?
- How did you make friends with people?
  - Could tell me about a specific friendship with someone from the UK?
  - How do you feel, think about this friendship?
- What is the best thing about your friendships in the UK?
- What is the worst things about your friendship in the UK?
- Have you maintained these friendships?
  - How?

## **Appendix 13- Final Semi-structured Interview Schedule**

### **Question 3:**

**Theme: ATCKs perceptions of their identity in friendships.**

Do you think your experiences as a person raised overseas have influenced your friendships?

- How do you think other people experience you?
- How would you describe yourself in relation to your friends?
  - What words or images come up for you when you think about being raised overseas.
- How might your friends describe you?
  - What words or images have others used to describe you?

END:

Is there anything I didn't ask you about that you feel is particularly relevant to your experience of friendship?

### **Prompts.**

- \* Whatever you feel is significant.
- \* Whatever seems most relevant.
- \* Whichever you would like to start with.
- \* Could you say more about that?
- \* Could you please give me an example of that?
- \* How did that make you feel?
- \* What makes you think that?
- \* What made you feel that way?
- \* What do you mean by X?
- \* How have you experienced X?

### **Debriefing:**

Thank you.

How do you feel about our conversation?

Is there anything that bothered you about our conversation?

Is there anything you would like me to omit from the interview when I transcribe it?

Do you have any questions for me?

*Go through the debriefing sheet.*



## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

**07/07/08.**

This is my first diary entry for my research project. Hopefully it will help me keep track of the decision process for my work. I think, it's also part of the required methodology for Discourse analysis. I still don't think I am doing the right method, but encouragement from CT and some recommended reading might help me feel more convinced. I met with RT today and she has given me a useful anecdote for simplifying my research. As a Doctorate I am only looking at one scale of the fish. My project was too ambitious and lacked focus, so in re-submitting it I need clarity and focus.

**11/10/08**

I have changed my mind about researching young people. Following discussion with RT, I feel that this population would be harder to reach and gain consent from.

This means doing a bit more research on the issues facing Adult Third Culture Kids. Given the majority of the research is for young people I feel concerned about how I will form my literature review. I think essentially my research questions remain the same.

**16/04/09**

We had a research meeting today and JL was talking about qualitative methods. It suddenly occurred to me that I have been trying to position my research qualitatively, but using quantitative language- no wonder I am so confused. If I let go of the empiricism that has defined the TCK literature I might feel more free to explore any emerging content from my data analysis.

**31/07/11.**

I am not looking forward to going back this year. How can I deal with the stress of research and all the sadness of the past few months?

**18/11/09**

Thoughts about identity.

Identity can be 1) developmental (a realist argument??). Within this there could be issues of loss. Am I attending to loss, because my own is so great?

Bowlby's attachment theories. 2) phenomenological (relativist/social interactionist). Within this there could be issues of marginalization.

My question then is how are these constructed during the interview?

People from minority backgrounds don't engage with services. There is a big push in the NHS or inclusion (diversity). Where it is not equitable safety nets can be put in place that reach the excluded population. These safety nets don't include 'privileged' people. Or minorities that look/sound like the majority!

TCK experience difficulty returning to their 'home' country. There are high rates of depression, but they don't access services? WHY? This is a different question to the one I am asking. I am asking if the experience of coming 'home' is influenced by friendships. It feels like there is so much to cover and I'm bouncing around without a focus.

**09/12/09.**

I met with LC today to discuss my research. She looked as confused as I felt. One thing she said which has really affected me is that my subject seems very heavy. I feel that way; heavy. But how to make it lighter? Identity is massively complicated and there isn't much to go on in the TCK literature.

## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

She also suggested I make better use of the journal- hence my writing today. The reading she gave me should be useful, and I've found an example of a diary in a published dissertation on Ethos. It seems some of it is simply stating the thought process and as usual I have been put off, because I'm over complicating things!

**13/12/09.**

I need to work harder at backing myself up. I'm completely overwhelmed by the epistemology essay and I'm chasing a line related to identity theory. This seems easier to ground in the existing TCK research. However, it is heavy going and not really what I was interested in.

The Schaetti chapter in Military Brats argues that loss and grief is not so much an issue of identity theory, but an attachment issue. Loss could inform my theory of identity formation, but Schaetti argues for attachment. This could be the theory that informs the research, but it doesn't help with my research questions. What are my research questions- I feel like I have lost sight of them yet again.

This is what I have put in the essay.

- i) How are ATCK social relationships constituted in talk as social action? What are the processes by which relationships are enacted in and through discourse?
  - What are the historical origins of the discourses available?
- ii) What are the ways in which language is constructive and functional in the performance of ATCK relationships?
  - What is the power of the available discourses in constructing relationships; how are ATCK positioned by the available discourses?
- iii) What is the role of the researcher in the construction in the construction of the findings?

Research suggests that ATCK face a variety of difficulties forming and maintaining social relationship and account for this using developmental theory and positivist assumptions. Other research maintains that this is a privileged group with an advantage when compared with their peers who spent all of their developmental years in their passport country. The effects of language in the formation of relationships is not considered in the majority of the literature. The social constructionist approach utilised in the proposed research suggests that language not only constructs a persons of view of the world, but also their relationships. As such, the proposed research aims to explore how ATCKs account for their relationships, with a view to help develop therapeutic resources for this group.

But it seems grotesque and unmanageable to me now. I wanted to study the experience of friendship and somehow I'm looking at the power dynamics of friendship. What on earth could they be???

**29/01/10**

I met with Rachel today to discuss the Epistemology essay. I am quite surprised I passed, but I did work hard to try to wrap my head around the methods. I still feel like I'm doing the wrong method. I think I should be doing IPA and I have put this in my Doctoral review. I have spent some time looking at IPA and apart from anything it seems much less complicated to argue this methodology with the questions I have.

## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

I have a few concerns re: the literature I am using to establish my research questions. Namley that the Schaetti work is not peer reviewed. She's not published in any journals, but she is quoted in several papers. Using her could demonstrate that I am critically able to evaluate the research. HOWEVER Social/personal identity could be revealed in the analysis of my interviews. At this stage I do not need to articulate it.

I have found some additional reading to review-  
Critical social psychology: an introduction- Gough & Mcfaddon.  
Hybrid identity- Homi K. Bhabha:

Homi K. Bhabha (born 1949) is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language, and the Director of the Humanities Centre, at Harvard University. He is one of the most important figures in contemporary post-colonial studies, and has coined a number of the field's neologisms and key concepts, such as hybridity, mimicry, difference, ambivalence.[1] Such terms describe ways in which colonised peoples have resisted the power of the coloniser, according to Bhabha's theory.

One of his central ideas is that of "hybridisation," which, taking up from Edward Said's work, describes the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. His work transformed the study of colonialism by applying post-structuralist methodologies to colonial texts.

### **Influences**

Bhabha's work in postcolonial theory owes much to post-structuralism. Notable among Bhabha's influences include Jacques Derrida and deconstruction; Jacques Lacan and Lacanian psychoanalysis; and the works of Michel Foucault.[2][3] Additionally, in a 1995 interview with W.J.T. Mitchell, Bhabha stated that Edward Said is the writer who has most influenced his thought

Social cognition- A. Hepburn

**13/01/10.**

STILL waiting for Ethics- it has been 4 months now!

**9/03/10**

I was walking through the train station this afternoon and I saw a massive add campaign for Black Rock Asset Management Fund. It said. Be here, be Global. They then talk about making people a lot of money.

I have started to think of friendship in the UK as being tied to a class system that reflects a capitalist agenda rather than the old aristocracy. People from overseas are more 'global' and are therefore in a more 'dominant' position. I was thinking this came across in dialogue such as 'privileged,' 'spoiled' 'posh' and so on, when talking about travel as an 'opportunity' irrespective of actual financial position. Being global means having more money, money equals power, power equals knowledge. I thought this was well demonstrated in the Black Rock poster. However, I am uncomfortable with the argument itself and haven't been able to defend it without it ringing in my ears.

I think I have been trying to fit my research into the methodology, rather than vice versa. I investigated IPA a while back and felt that describing the experience of TCK being friends with non-TCK would have been a much easier and far simpler task, given the lack of research in this area. That way, if I understand IPA correctly, if marginalization is an issue this can be attributed to the subjective experience rather than what seems to me a sinister power agenda.

## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

I think I need to read a bit more and have already discussed with M. who gave me some recommendations. I may be leaving it too late to change, but this has been niggling since my first year proposal!

**11/04/10**

I am so unbelievably frustrated. Following my mock viva, it has been suggested that I use IPA instead of DA. This is what I have been saying since my first year and instead of listening to my instincts I have been carried away on the enthusiasm of people in positions of greater power and therefore more 'knowledgeable'. I think this should serve as a massive learning experience for me. I am the expert on this field and no matter how clever the conversations with supervisors seem, I am still the most informed person on this subject. I need to be more convinced of that if I am to be convincing of that. If I can not defend my position when it comes to my decision making process I will not be able to defend my research at the real viva. I am glad to be doing IPA, but very annoyed that I have spent so much time and energy pursuing DA. It feels like I must begin again and learn all over again. The first time was excruciating so I am not looking forward to this. However, from what I remember IPA was easier to comprehend than DA. Have sent a request to Ethics to change the methodology.

**12/06/10.**

I have taken my interview questions to the IPA group and it was suggested I am forcing an agenda and need to open my questions up to broader categories. I have reframed my questions as a result.

**16/07/10.**

I did a test run of the interview schedule on a TCK friend today. It revealed some interesting things. Words she used in relation to her friendships with others, i.e. how other view her- stigma / spoiled / spoilt / little rich girl / silver platter / real world.

All make me think there is a power discourse of privilege.

To describe herself she used the terms.

closed off / funny.

she also said others don't find it easy to relate to her. To cope she uses humour and avoids telling people very much about her in the initial stages. What is the effect of this???

She gave me some feedback also. She said she didn't really think about her friendships. (Perhaps it would be useful for me to ask participants to think about their friendships before interview.

the problem is that most of the people I am close with are not from the UK. Perhaps I should not differentiate between friendships. I should ask participants to describe any friendship experiences.

She also fed back that she felt I wanted her to say her friendships were good, that I was leading her to discuss the good. Perhaps I am using my own experiences of friendship to ask for details of others. I need to be aware of this and less leading in my interviews.

**20/07/10**

Another practice run on the modified questions and this time I was really upset with the results. My participant became very distressed approximately 20 minutes in and I ended the interview. I can't see how I should change the questions any further and I have my pilot set up in two days! Very nervous, but I will do my best.

## Appendix 14- Reflective journal.

**15/08/10**

I am not having much luck recruiting from Facebook. I have sent an email out to friends and colleagues. Hopefully this will be more useful.

Sampling issues to consider using this method.

### CRITICISMS

The most obvious criticism about convenience sampling is sampling bias and that the sample is not representative of the entire population. This may be the biggest disadvantage when using a convenience sample because it leads to more problems and criticisms.

Systematic bias stems from sampling bias. This refers to a constant difference between the results from the sample and the theoretical results from the entire population. It is not rare that the results from a study that uses a convenience sample differ significantly with the results from the entire population. A consequence of having systematic bias is obtaining skewed results.

Another significant criticism about using a convenience sample is the limitation in generalization and inference making about the entire population. Since the sample is not representative of the population, the results of the study cannot speak for the entire population. This results to a low external validity of the study.

### NOTES

When using convenience sampling, it is necessary to describe how your sample would differ from an ideal sample that was randomly selected. It is also necessary to describe the individuals who might be left out during the selection process or the individuals who are overrepresented in the sample.

In connection to this, it is better if you can describe the possible effects of the people who were left out or the subjects that are overrepresented to your results. This will allow the readers of your research to get a good grasp of the sample that you were testing. It will also enable them to estimate the possible difference between your results and the results from the entire population.

Use when you are unable to access a wider population, for example due to time or cost constraints.

#### Method

Do not worry too much about taking random samples of the population - just use people who are available. Use people in the street, people you know, people who work with you, customers and so on.

Do use as many people as possible to ensure results from a single test is not just a coincidence.

#### Example

A group of students in a high school do a study about teacher attitudes. They interview teachers at the school, a couple of teachers in the family and few others who are known to their parents.

#### Discussion

Convenience sampling generally assumes a homogeneous population, and that one person is pretty much like another. Whilst people are known to be different, the difference is assumed to be probabilistic - thus if 80% of a sample prefer coffee to tea, you might conclude that 80% of the population at large would choose coffee. In practice, your sample may be mostly middle class Parisians and the same test in London may well give a different result.

Many famous psychological experiments were done with available people. Most typically, experiments done in universities use students, simply because they are cheap, willing and available. This has caused significant debate about the validity of results.

## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

Convenience sampling is also known as Opportunity Sampling, Accidental Sampling or Haphazard Sampling.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method.

**15/11/10**

First real interview. I think I need to adapt my questions again. Much like the first two practices they have a lot of questions about my questions.

**23/09/10**

Some of my participants live a considerable distance away and one has replied from HK. I wonder if it would be possible to do interviews via SKYPE?

**08/10/10**

After 3 interviews I am starting to see emerging themes.

Boarding school students seem to have what they call 'stability' while those who did not go to BS seem to want it.

I am concerned that I might not be asking the right questions. It seems not to be 'rich'.

One participant looked very distressed. Wanted to end the interview- might have said that she looked upset and did she want to stop, but I wanted my data!!!

I say yeah a lot in my interviews, is this leading...

**16/10/10**

First SKYPE interview went much better than I thought. I can't find precedence for doing this in the literature! Only telephone interview.

**18/10/10.**

Have found info to support online interview! Apart from technical issues and building rapport, which can be addressed, there don't seem to be any problems.

Ayling, R. and A. J. Mewse (2009). "Evaluating Internet interviews with gay men." Qualitative Health Research 19(4): 566-576.

**3/01/11**

I sat down today to do the transcribing. I really don't like it at all. I find it tedious beyond belief and get distracted by almost anything. I think this will be much harder going than I at first thought. I am more involved in getting the words down right than listening to the content unfortunately.

**17/04/11**

I have finished the transcribing. I can not believe how long it has taken, but that could have something to do with RSI. I have started keeping a reflective journal related to the specific interview transcripts. I hope this will be a useful way to generate validity in my analysis.

**16/06/11**

This entry is separate from my analysis entries because I am so overwhelmingly frustrated and confused by the analysis. I have taken a break and focused on my literature review as a way of clearing my head from all the criticism I hear about my analysis.

## **Appendix 14- Reflective journal.**

**19/06/11**

I met with a friend today to discuss methodology. She said I may be over thinking things. I have heard this before, but I feel so confused. I have started making notes about IPA in a file to try to summarise the key themes. I think this will be helpful when I re-write the Method section- of which I now have a first draft!!!

**23/06/11.**

I have had to ask for an extension. This feels like a personal failure, but completely unavoidable. Doing this makes me realise what

**26/08/11**

For personal reasons I have had to take some time away from writing any aspect of my thesis. My first reaction to the stress was to give it all up because its all just too hard, but of course I got back to it after some weeks away and now I have a first draft for my literature review!!!! It has taken me a month to write, as everything seems to be taking me a lot longer to do these days, but it is done. The review feels a bit descriptive and not critical enough, but the bones are there and hopefully I will be able to redraft the content in a more critical way as I progress.

Everything is taking me about 10 times longer than I thought it would, but I have started putting post-it notes up with little mantras to encourage me to stay the course. I think I also need to speak to my supervisor more regularly, I think I'm avoiding her right now.

**29/09/11.**

I haven't been able to work for a few days. I think this may be because I have analysed all transcripts for emergent themes and I am uncomfortable with where this has taken me. the final transcript is very negative about English people, and as I searched for connections across cases, I started to see this in all of them to some degree or another- except AM's I'm not sure where to go from here. Perhaps I need to examine my own negative views and then look again, or just embrace this as a new finding not previously in the TCK literature and consider other interpretations for it. Although I'm not sure what those might be. I think a validity check is in order.

**Interview w/ John. Participant No. 2**

Transcribing starts @ 3:08-

**Descriptive comments:** (red text) Record the key objects of concern for the px. Relationships, places, events, values, principles. Identify something that matters.**Linguistic comments:** (blue text) pronoun use, pauses, laughter, functional aspects of language, repetition, tone, degree of fluency. Metaphor.**Conceptual comments:** Focus on engaging at a more integrative and conceptual level. (green text)

<i>Emergent Themes</i>			<b>Original Transcript</b>	<b>Exploratory comments.</b>
	I:	1 2 3	In your own words, please could you tell me about your experience of friendship when you were living overseas?	
<i>Friendships are brief.</i>  <i>Friendship with other army kids is intense</i>  <i>Friendship isn't a serious commitment</i>  <i>Loss</i>  <i>Lack of memory</i>  <i>Father's influence.</i>	P:	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Ummm. Friendship for me is, when I was living overseas was, sometimes it was quite <u>fleeting</u> , because people coming and going. Umm, my, my Dad was in the armed forces and so we moved around quite a lot. What would happen is you would make friends with people and... then what would happen is that you may only be friends with them for 6, 7, 8 months, maybe less, maybe more and um, and either you would get posted on, or they would get posted on. So in some respects, friendship for me was, was, <u>sometimes very brief</u> . <u>Umm, you know it was short, snappy</u> , and uh, you know I remember thinking and uh I remember my dad saying to me that <u>you don't really have friends, you have acquaintances in our life</u> .	<p><b>Friends come and go.</b> Friendship is <b>fleeting-</b> conjures images of something romantic and intense,</p> <p><b>Short/snappy/brief friendships.</b> A bit cartoonish. Perhaps he has to make light of friendship to deal with the loss.</p> <p><b>Clarified with sometimes-</b> was this the <b>strongest memory?</b> Did the loss of the friendship stand out more strongly than the friendships that lasted? Or perhaps the quantity of those lost was more impressive.</p> <p><b>Dads job affected this.</b> Dads job and Dads advice. Father's position and influence is quite an effect on the experience of friendship. Father influenced his thinking.</p>
	I:	19	Yeah...	



<i>Humour to cope with loss.</i>	P:	20 21 22 23 24 25 26	Umm, that was what friends was 4 me, it was you met good people along the way who, you know, had good fun with. Umm, and then when it was time, it was like, nice knowing you, maybe see you another time ( <i>laughs/waves hand</i> ). And that was how it used to be, that was friendship for me, as I was growing up overseas.	<b>Brief encounters</b> Good fun- fairly easy. <b>Laughs a little, sounds cheerful/comical waves his hand and makes it sound glib-</b> doesn't really go with the sense of loss- does humour make it easier to bare the losses.  By ( <i>laughing</i> ) things off he avoids the pain of the loss.
	I:	27 28	Could you give me an eg of one of those brief and fleeting friendships?	
<i>Short duration of friendship in childhood.</i>  <i>Forgetting people.</i>  <i>Frustration.</i>  <i>Shared activity.</i>  <i>Friendship is intense.</i>  <i>Roaming childhood.</i>	P:	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45	Yeah. (Sighs). When, for example, when I was about 6 or 7 we living in Berlin at the time. and umm, I had a umm, a friend there and umm, oh man, I'm trying to remember the name of the lad now. And, we were there, we were there for a while and what happened was, my dad was actually based there for about 2 or 3 years and uhh, we then moved on umm, and, I mean, they came in about, I think it was about, 8 or 9 months before I left. And we were very, very, we were good friends at that time and we did everything together. We were always together and doing everything. Umm. and then when it was time, we moved somewhere else in Germany, uhh, and, and then what happened was, was that actually that we ended up at the same camp as them as few years later on, when I was about 13, 14, I think it was.	<b>Brief friendships in childhood.</b> He's forgotten the name- sounds exasperated. This e.g. is supposed to be brief, but he seems to be recalling one that lasted into his teens. Is it harder to recall the brief encounters? Less painful maybe?  <b>Being good friends. Doing everything, always.</b> Intense sounding.  <b>Moving around a lot.</b>
	I:	46	Ohhh.	

<p><i>Friendships evolve.</i></p> <p><i>Maintaining friendships requires adaptation.</i></p>	P:	47 48 49 50 51 52 53	And again I ran into them. And, you know, I was quite good friends with this person again and it was quite weird, it was kind of like we picked up where we left off. It was like, oh yeah, I remember you and he remember me, and so we sort-o, so yeah, we picked up again and it was like that re-acquaintance of people and everything picked up.	<p>Picking up a friendship is easy. Sort of suggests there were some differences/change to adapt to.</p> <p>Maintaining friendships requires some adapting/change.</p>
	I:	54	Ahhh.	
<p><i>Behaving in ways that don't fit with the adult self.</i></p> <p><i>Changing himself to fit in.</i></p> <p><i>Regret</i></p> <p><i>Feeling stupid</i></p>	P:	55 56 57	And you know, I remember doing, ahh, so many, sort of, stupid things with them when I was older, and also when I was younger with them, as well.	<p>Doing stupid things together. Sort of stupid-he sounds a little exasperated/embarrassed. In order to be friends within this environment does he have to act in a way that goes against who he is?</p> <p>Stupid -What might the effect of this be on his self esteem?</p>
	I:	58	(laughing)	I am colluding with him!!
<p><i>Modelling Parents job with friends.</i></p> <p><i>Army kids do as Army parents do.</i></p> <p><i>Shared identity with other army kids.</i></p>	P:	59 60 61 62 63	We used to, you know, <u>being army kids as well</u> , we used to play, we were 6 or 7 years old, we were playing like army games you know running around, playing in the wood and stuff (swings arms)	<p>Modelling the army life. You know. If in the army do as the army- seems obvious that others should understand that.</p> <p>Army kids- A strong sense of identity</p>
	I:	64	(laughing)	

<p><i>Sharing activities with TCKs</i></p> <p><i>Spending a lot of time with the same people.</i></p> <p><i>Emotional disengaging/distancing from friends</i></p> <p><i>Normalizing the friendship experience for him self by sharing exp with other TCK.</i></p> <p><i>Endless cycle of Making and losing Friendship in childhood.</i></p>	<p>P:</p>	<p>65 it was pretty good fun then, uhh (chuckles). But</p> <p>66 yeah, that's what I mean, it was like I was really,</p> <p>67 really good friends with this person. Did</p> <p>68 everything with them. You know, we were in</p> <p>69 scouts together sorry, cubs together, or whatever it</p> <p>70 was and then like I said later on we were really</p> <p>71 good friends. We used to play football together</p> <p>72 and do things like that. So yeah, that, it's kind of</p> <p>73 that thing. And you, you have these friendships,</p> <p>74 like I said, that you pick up, like I said along the</p> <p>75 way. But it's really weird, cause like I said, <u>I can't</u></p> <p>76 <u>even remember the lads name now. It's gone blank</u></p> <p>77 and I don't even know where he is. I have no idea</p> <p>78 what he's doing, you know and it's the same in a</p> <p>79 lot of respects for a lot of people I've met along</p> <p>80 the way.</p>	<p>Shared activities list the activities he did with his friends- cubs, football, playing in the woods. There is a lot of doing with rather than being with.</p> <p>You, you. Not referring to himself, not using I. If he distances himself from the friendship does he avoid the pain of the loss? Or perhaps by making it a general experience he normalises it for himself.</p> <p>Forgetting people. Weird. In this way he is different from other people, because 'normal' people would remember their friends. Regret about</p> <p>Repetition of 'like I said'. Sense that FRIENDSHIP is cyclical and repetitive for him, is was always the same in childhood.</p>
	<p>I:</p>	<p>81 Yeah...</p>	<p>What do mean the same?</p>
<p><i>Not really moving on.</i></p> <p><i>Being stuck in the past.</i></p> <p><i>Glib attitude to friendship</i></p> <p><i>Distancing from friends to survive the loss.</i></p>	<p>P:</p>	<p>82 You know people I've met, people I kinda</p> <p>83 remember. I remember their faces and I can</p> <p>84 remember quite a bit about them, but then you</p> <p>85 kind of, you almost, you move on, (<i>says this</i></p> <p>86 <i>slowly</i>) and it's like, OK there's that bit gone and</p> <p>87 you might meet them again and it's like Oh yeah!</p> <p>88 and I'll have a conversation and then it's like,</p> <p>89 there, OK! that's done and you move on again.</p> <p>90 That's how it was for me, I feel like that in some</p> <p>91 respects.</p>	<p>Moving on. Kind of- almost move on-not completely. Perhaps in some sense he is stuck in the past, not able to let go completely of the friendship.</p> <p>Meeting up again with friends. Said with ease/enthusiasm.</p> <p>That's done-matter of fact. A sense that this is the status quo and you have to accept these losses in order to survive.</p>

	I:	92	How do you feel about that?	
<i>Conflicted attitude towards being TCK.</i>	P:	93 94 95 96 97 98 99	Ummm. It's really funny, 'cause like I said, I was at a wedding this, just this weekend gone, and I was talking to another forces kid there and she hated it. She hated the lifestyle and she didn't want to go back to that at all. And I was kinda like, well you know what in some respects I kinda miss it.	Difference between his view and the other forces kid. Hate/at all. Clear sense that being TCK can be polarizing, either loving or hating it.  Missing the lifestyle. Kinda- not certain he misses it.
	I:	100	Yeah...	How do you miss it?
<i>Contrasting self with other</i> <i>Mobile spirit</i> <i>No place to call home.</i> <i>No sense of belonging without F or family.</i> <i>Being adaptable to fit in with others.</i> <i>Flexible attitude to the function of Fship.</i>	P:	101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118	Moving around, and going to a new camp and going to a new school and having to make new friends and, and everything else. So umm, she was like (inaudible) I've got a base, that I can say OK so when I go home to this town or this new city, then this is the place that I would call home. And, and there is that for me. This is why when people ask me this question, "where are you from in the UK?" It's, it's li- I say to them, well that's a very difficult question for me to answer. I- My Mum's family is from Manchester and my Dads family is from Glasgow I often say, and, you know, if I'm asked I say, well OK Manchester I suppose is my home, but it, it's not. I, you know, I don't have much family there, and it doesn't and there's no real friends there apart from colleagues that I worked with after I finished university for a couple of years.	Comparing himself to another TCK who wants stability. He wants change.  His place of origin is not his home.  Home is where friends and family are.  Explaining himself to other people. Difficult to answer he has to manufacture an answer. Needing to belong somewhere. Orientating himself towards a single place is difficult.  Real friends There are dif type of F. to serve dif functions.

	I:	119	Umm.	What makes you think Manchester is your Home? What is a real F?
<i>Superficial relationships.</i> <i>Independence.</i> <i>Inability to settle down</i> <i>Lack of Intimacy.</i>	P:	120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127	<p>And , you know, it, it, for me, it was one of those things. <u>But what I do think it has done and the reason why I do like it, is that it has made me quite independent</u> in some respects and saying, OK I'm gonna go do this, I'm gonna do that. And I'm gonna go see this place and, but also how, I think it makes it very easy for you sometimes to open up a conversation with other people.</p>	<p>TCK background has made him independent. Quite, some respect- hes' not totally independent. He's independent in that he's free to travel and not tied down, but in what ways does he mean he might not be independent? .</p> <p>Easy to talk with others. Open up, not to continue or close. There is something superficial about this. His meeting people is based on conversation, not intimacy.</p>
	I:	128	Yeah.	What makes you think that it's easy?
<i>Independence</i> <i>Glib attitude to separation.</i> <i>Superficial attachments.</i> <i>Travel as an important lifestyle choice.</i>		129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143	<p>You're not bothered about starting up talking with other people and having this. And I know for example when I was at university I went and did work America and I was travelling around afterwards down west I was in New Orleans, and there was another British student who was also doing the same things as me and I just happened to get chatting to him and we were, we ended up doing loads and loads of stuff together in New Orleans, you know, doing this, doing that and whatever, and then on the last, on one of the last days, I was like, OK well I wanna go see this, and he was like uhh, well I don't really wanna see that and I was like, OK, thanks a lot (<i>he waves</i>), it's been nice knowing ya!</p>	<p>Talking with others. Not bothered some indifference to this process rather than interested in people he seems to view them as distraction.</p> <p>Doing things with others. This and that. Not engaged with his activity-seems to be going through the motions.</p> <p>Separating from others. Glib way of saying this. Gestures and appears indifferent. Friendships are disposable, no need to adjust yourself to accommodate others, because others will come along.</p>

	I:	144	(laughing)	
<p><i>His independence is difficult for others to accept.</i></p> <p><i>Two side to being TCK.</i></p> <p><i>No childhood freinds is a negative part of TCK.</i></p>	P:	145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154	<p>and that was it and it was, <u>I think he was kinda shocked by that.</u> But, but for me it was like, it's been fun, but I know I wanna go and do this and so...I'm gonna go and do it. You know, and, it's, I think it, it works both ways. It, yeah you have no real any way you could say yeah these are my core friends, and these are core people I really know well, I mean there are people I obviously that I do hold dear to me, and there are, I have kept contact with them, you know.</p>	<p>Others are shocked by his independence. Kinda &amp; I think- he assumed, didn't ask. People may find him abrasive and too independent</p> <p>He has core friends. There is something missing. Independence has a price.</p>
	I:	155	Yeah...	What do you mean by Core friends?
<p><i>Awareness of his impact on others as negative.</i></p> <p><i>Referencing himself with other TCK to normalize experiences.</i></p> <p><i>Friendships happen quickly in the Army.</i></p> <p><i>Forcing friendship</i></p> <p><i>Being the entertainer.</i></p> <p><i>Faking it to make friends</i></p>	P:	156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167	<p>So there is that, but I think along the way, I have lost contact with people as well. <u>And it, it's distressing, you know, I think, it does have an impact on the way you see people and the way you run your life. I think it makes me, I feel like I have to be an entertainer all the time.</u> You know, like I've got to try an entertain people. You know, cause, snap everything in (<i>snaps his fingers</i>) and try and make, you know, get people on board and make and so, yeah, I think it did shape in a lot of ways who I am and the way I am and the way I do things. So hum, yeah...</p>	<p>Loosing contact with others. Distressing. People may find him abrasive and too independent</p> <p>Being TCK influences the way you view your friendship. You- refers to all TCKs. Normalizing his own experience. I - refers to himself. Engages at a more intimate level with his feeling.</p> <p>By entertaining others he makes friends. Snap. It has to happen quickly or it could be lost. Get on board. People need to be on his side or they are not- very black and white thinking.</p>

	I:	168 169 170	You said to, to be, it's had an impact on your friendships so and you, to be an entertainer? That you have to hold peoples attention?	How do you mean?
	P:	171	Yeah.	
	I:	172	Could you say more about that, John?	
<i>Loss is sad but inevitable.</i>  <i>Being Unique.</i>  <i>Pretending to be someone else to make FRIENDS</i>  <i>Feeling isolated from others.</i>	P:	173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183	Yeah, I think, I think because, ( <i>sighs</i> ) the reason is that yo-, when you're having to make these friendships, in this, this short time that you might have with these people, who are your friends, you know, at that time. It's almost like everyone knows. I think, and this is the thing, <u>I think it's kind of unique.</u> When you're a forces kid and maybe this is slightly different. When you're a forces kid you KNOW that you may only be in a certain location for so long and that people will change.	Loosing friends. Sighs, sounds a little sad about the experience.  Emphasis on the word know- Accepts the certainty of the situation. There is no other way to be, not escape from the inevitability of loss.  When you're a forces kid- separate from other kids.
	I:	184	Yeah...	
<i>Influencing others.</i>  <i>Making an impact.</i>  <i>Fear of rejection.</i>  <i>Pretending to be someone you are not.</i>	P:	185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192	And so what happens is that you almost have to make an impact, because people are like, well I might not be here for very long and so <u>if you don't make that impact with them initially, they're not really gonna, it almost feels like they're not gonna want to be around you,</u> because it's like, wah, it doesn't matter. I'm gonna be moving on in a little while anyway, so	Making an impact on others. Mentions time and moving on soon. Forcing a friendship out of fear of loneliness.  Facing rejection. They're not really, then feels like- some uncertainty about his belief.  If you're not engaging you're not interesting. Viewed as temporary entertainment. Fear of rejection.



	I:	193	Yeah...	
<i>Desire is necessary for getting to know people.</i>  <i>Desperation</i>  <i>Forcing friendships to avoid loneliness.</i>  <i>Fear.</i>	P:	194 195 196 197 198 199 200	So I feel like you kind of have that desire to find out a lot about people and what they are doing and, and get involved with them and, and, and also try and just be entertaining and do like... because you want people to almost BE your friend, if that makes sense, in that short period. Because you know it's gonna change.	<b>Forming a friendship.</b> Desire-kind of. Some indifference to making friends-juxtaposed with the emphasis on BE, which seems almost desperate. Forcing a friendship out of fear of loneliness. Is there an awareness that friendships made like this don't last?
	I:	201	Yeah...	
<i>Loneliness of being TCK.</i>  <i>Fear of loneliness</i>	P:	202 203	and it can be kinda lonely if you don't have that situation.	<b>Loneliness.</b> Kinda- perhaps there is an alternative to the loneliness. Making friends avoids the inevitability of loneliness, but perhaps this isn't a real option.
	I:	204	Yeah...	
<i>Impulsivity in making friends.</i>  <i>Desperation not to be alone.</i>	P:	205 206 207 208	cause you know well oh if I don't make any friends here, that's it, <u>I'm without friends in this situation for however many months I'm here.</u> you know,	If you don't have friends you're stuck in a difficult situation. Inevitability of loneliness- it's not always certain you'll make friends so you spend time alone if you don't try really hard.
	I:	209	Yeah...	What makes you think you'd be without FRIENDS



<i>Pretending to be someone he is not.</i>  <i>Performing for others</i>  <i>Learning to adapt him self.</i>  <i>Discomfort with self.</i>	P:	210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220	<p>But, uh. Yeah so I think it's about making an impact. You want to make that impact on people, and you know, and you sort of want all the one-liners and the witty comments and you know doing the stupid things and and, th- those are what I am talking about. You feel like it's getting people to like you because they think oh yeah, you know, he's a funny guy, he's the entertainer, or he'll do something stupid or, or whatever, you know, I think it's that kind of thing that I'm trying to get at.</p>	<p>People like him because he's entertaining. List of techniques he has picked up to entertain people with. It seems quite sad that he feels pressure to entertain,</p> <p>He wasn't the one-liners- he's learned to be this way, it's not come naturally to him- being something that he's not-</p> <p>He's the entertainer, not I'm. Distances himself from this person, outside of himself.</p> <p>Stupid- Not comfortable with his persona.</p>
	I:	221 222 223	<p>So, so if I understand you. It's about making an impact on people to create friendships so that you could, so you wouldn't feel so lonely?</p>	
<i>Distancing self from loss.</i>  <i>Identity as a Forces kid</i>	P:	224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233	<p>To, to a certain extent, and uh, I think yeah. That is you, you're new in an area, for example what happens is this; You're, you're new in an area. Like for example what happens is this. You've moved in, your Dad has moved in and it, it's really weird, because the person I was talking to, funnily enough, over the, when I was at the wedding, who is also a Forces Kid. She was saying, that her Dad, like my Dad, was in signals, right? Her Dad was in Air Force, the Army, mine was in the Air Force.</p>	<p>Being the new person. Stops and starts several times here. Avoiding the painful memory of having to relocate.</p> <p>Giving e.g. of another forces kid. He's using her to describe his loss- distances himself from it.</p> <p>Army jobs.</p>
	I:	234	OK.	

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

### Thoughts Following the interview.

This was a really enjoyable interview. John was very chatting and lively and easy to engage with. Perhaps this is because I know him through a friend and he works in my old school so we have some shared ground.

John seemed to have a lot to say and didn't need many prompts. I'm not sure if this is a good thing as I got lost in much of what he was saying and I should have perhaps tried to keep him more focused. I do jot a few key words (what I consider key words, anyway) down as we progress, but I'm finding it difficult to interrupt and ask what the participant means by X.

I think I will enjoy transcribing this one as he was very entertaining.

How I felt?	What I heard?	Ideas for themes?
Entertained.	He seems quite blasé about certain friendships.	Attachment issues?
Sad at times as he seemed to view friendship quite superficially.	Forces kids stay together	Commonality
	Ease with making connections	Differences- people that stand out (as they are the same as John)
	Independence	
	Travel bug/'wanderlust'	Sadness (double edged sword as he wouldn't change it)
	Like ppl who are 'odd'	
	Has a unique perspective on life.	
	Confused by ppl who don't	
	No core group he has grown up with.	
	He leaves relationships first-	Commitment issues?
	Making an effort- needing reciprocity.	

### After transcribing-

## **Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

It's very difficult to listen to this interview as I hear so many missed questions and poor attempts to glean depth from John's comments. However difficult this is I do hear a lot of content in this interview.

I am really pleased John was so chatty, but I could have helped him focus a little more. I perhaps could have been more assertive with my questions. There are several occasions where I could have asked him what he meant by X, but I was fairly lost in what he was talking about, so this was not on my agenda at the time.

### **STEP 1: Reading of the transcript.**

This was frustrating as I re-experienced the same frustration with myself as an interviewer as I did when transcribing.

I am not sure if I was in charge of this interview as John seems to have run along with his responses a lot and they may not be focused and seem repetitive at times. A few times when I could have asked for clarity of the subject I have just mumbled a yes or UMM- I think I could have been a bit more directive. Unfortunately this is the psychotherapist in me letting the client take the active role and I've not shed that person for this research.

It seems to be John has a very superficial take on friendship. He can take them or leave them; yet he talks about the 'core group' of people. At first I thought this was a small select group, but on re-reading it seems to be quite a sprawling number of people. Conversations and shared activity come up a lot.

He seems to be attracted to quirky people?

I have similar experiences with John in terms of

- 1) Feeling responsible for my father's career.
- 2) Modelling some of my father's attitude to relationships.
- 3) Fearing settling down because change would come soon.

However I have been fortunate in that I have maintained friendships with a small number of people since a very young age. I have kept in touch with these people and I feel really sad that John has not had this same experience.

I missed a lot of opportunities to ask John to expand, because I assumed I knew what he was talking about!! e.g. In 116 could have asked what made him think it was going to happen. Might have revealed something I hadn't thought of rather than assuming I knew what he was talking about.

There is an undercurrent of inevitability in John's description of friendship. Almost fatalistic? A belief that this is the way things will be so why try to be different. I can almost hear, and totally empathise with the attitude that why bother to get close to people when it all going to end?

I also thought a lot about my own Father when reading this transcript. John brought back a lot of my own childhood memories. I will have to be mindful of this when analysing the data. I may over identify with him and look for similar experiences to my own, or perversely ignore things because I am trying not to see familiar themes from my own experiences.

### **STEP 2: First reading and making notes.**

## **Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

There is so much in this interview that resonates with me. I may have over identified with John, and this is why I failed to ask more questions. He says you know a lot, and I do 'know', my own version that is. This has the effect of my interpreting his accounts of events quite quickly. I am being careful not to be too subjective in my analysis, but this will require further checking with others to ensure validity.

Of particular interest to me, where accounts he gave of his fathers views on friendship. My own father used to say don't get too close we'll be leaving this year or don't get too comfortable, we wont be here long. When I examine the effect of this on my own friendships it's quite profound. I fear getting close to people, because I may loose them, but also when or if I get close to them, I feel trapped and stagnant. This must be very confusing for others.

I was also interested in his description of not adding new friends to the group when he's already made 'initial contact'. I wish I had explored this a little more in the interview. I identified with him in that I feel saturated by friends after moving somewhere new and ignore potentially good friendships if they come along, simply to avoid further demands on my time. I could have explored this further with him, and will be mindful when interpreting his account.

*I have noticed that this is the second interview where I mention closeness and ask about it. Am i trying to figure out how to be close to my own friends??*

Towards the end of the interview he gives some really interesting accounts of how the interview has helped him empathise with another Forces kid, one who said he could't understand at the beginning. However, I used the expression double edge sword to account for his experiences, which he then picks up on. Not sure how much of his reasoning is my influence.

### **Second reading and making notes.**

This was much easier. John has a lot to say about his friendships and much of it seems to match with the existing literature. I can hear things like don't get too involved with people, try to keep a distance. I also hear much of his identity caught up with the Forces.

He also seems to be attracted to people who are quirky/different/unique- words he uses to describe himself during the interview.

It is still interesting to me that I asked him what kids of people he felt close to. This was on my original interview schedule, but I changed it, to allow people to give their own definition of friendships. That is I wanted to avoid position friendships as one way or another. Seems I have not let go of the concept though. Perhaps the real reason I am involved in this research is because I want to know how to be close to people Thus i ask others how or if they have achieved it. What I am learning is that closeness seems difficult for TCKs.

### **STEP 3: Developing emergent themes.**

This was interesting as I noticed a lot of identity issues arising from this text. John has a very strong sense of identity with other 'forces kids' I also noticed he has a very strong urge to travel, but more than this he is repeating the 'come and go' environment of his childhood. I wonder if this is just something I noticed once and stuck with me, or if it will be a recurring theme throughout the transcript.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

I will not cut up the themes and group them this time, instead I will cut an past the list into tables as I see them fitting together and then try to rename them.

*The list of emergent themes can be found in the order they appeared in the table of the original data included in separately bound Appendix.*

### **STEP 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes.**

Using abstraction I developed the following Superordinate themes. I think some of these can be broken down into smaller themes or shared between categories. I'm not sue why I have so many more 'themes' from this transcript, but I am bracketing my knowledge of the previous case to allow the mergence of new themes. Still it seems like a HUGE number of 'themes' and I feel a bit overwhelmed with the volume of it. I need to speak with someone really but so far this is what stands out for me and I'll return to it again later to use other methods of developing emergent themes.

Being a TCK
Positives of TCK outweigh the negative.
Wouldn't change things.
Search for a base.
Confusion about being aTCK.
Conflicted attitude towards being TCK.
Nostalgia for loss of long terms friendships.
TCK makes him more open minded
TCK limits number of friendships.
Repeating childhood separations.
Two sides to being TCK.
Conflicted about cost/benefit of TCK.
No childhood FRIENDS is a negative part of TCK.
TCK has an effect on FRIENDSHIP
Repeating the lifestyle from childhood.
Repeating friendship style in adulthood.
Roaming childhood.
Disintegrated lifestyle.
No place to call home.

**Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

Being a TCK
Being a TCK forces to take the initiative in friendships.
Confusion about home.
Forgetting
Lack of memory
Forgetting people.
Frequent moves effects Friendship recall

Self with others
Lack of strong attachments to others
Emotional distancing
Comparing self to others.
rejecting past self.
Discomfort with self.
Being the outsider looking in.
Causing misunderstandings with others.
Unique perspective of the world & Different world view
Achievement orientated.
Strong opinions of the world.
Isolated from the mainstream society.
Uncertainty about friends
Upsetting others with his views on friendships.
Other people don't trust him.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Psychological effects of Friendships
Regret Frustration.
Confusion about loss of friendships.
Feeling stupid Being Stupid. Stupid Being stupid. Being stupid/
Fear of rejection. Feeling rejected by others. Bouncing back from rejection.
Low self esteem. Low self esteem.
Loss
Questioning self.
Desperation
Fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of rejection. Fear of loneliness.
Impulsivity in making friends.
Desperation not to be alone.
Pretending to be someone he is not.
Loneliness of being TCK.
Fear of loneliness. Fear of loneliness
Fear of Isolation. Fear of isolation. Feeling isolated from others.
Forcing friendships to avoid loneliness.
Feeling hurt
Sadness about loss. Grief re; loss
Can't relax in FRIENDSHIP

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Psychological effects of Friendships
Discomfort with people's views about his lifestyle.
Feeling judged.

Sense of self
Independence. Independence. Independence. Independence
Self as different / Self as different from others.
Self identity as weird.
Being different
His independence is difficult for others to accept.
Independence from others.
Contrasting self with other
Acts of rebellion. Rebellion. Disregard for rules/authority.
Being Unique. Being unique.
Awareness of his impact on others as negative.
Questioning self. Rejecting self
Dawning awareness about self in FRIENDSHIP
Certain of self.
Strong opinions about the world.
Pride in self.
Self-confidence.
Self assurance.



**Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

Sense of self
Arrogance & Superiority of view.
Being thought of as outspokenness.
Being different in the UK
Others find him a challenge to cope with. (he's difficult?)
Questioning self as normal
Negative self image
Lack of confidence
Discomfort with self.

Rejecting past F.
Dissatisfaction with childhood FRIENDSHIP
Disappointed with childhood friendship experiences.
Regret about friendship choices.
Viewing friendships as idiotic makes them easier to let go of.
Separate lifetimes.
Discomfort with friendship experiences.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Social identity.
Shared experiences with other TCKs
Army kids stick together.
Referencing group.
Support from people with similar background.
Differences between Army kids and local culture/Us and them.
Army kids take care of each other.
Army kid.
Shared identity with other army kids.
Army kids.
Homogeneity with other Army kids.
Army kids can recognise each other.
Shared culture of being in the Army.
Recognises other Army people.
Incorporating the Army identity.
Staying with people from similar backgrounds.
Identity as a Forces kid
Lack of social identity support.
Normalising the friendship experience for him self by sharing exp with other TCK.
Sharing activities with TCKs

Empathy
Mutual lack of understanding.
Inability to empathise with others.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Need to travel
Being mobile is a force beyond control.
Inability to settle down. Inability to settle down. Inability to settle down Inability to settle down.
Travel as an important lifestyle choice.
Travel bug/travel bug/travel bug
Desire to travel.
Comfortable with traveling.
Familiar lifestyle to keep moving.
Fear of settling down.
Desire for adventure.
Mobile spirit
Struggle to understand people who don't travel.
Important to travel and experience other things.
Feeling judged by others who haven't travelled.
Pressure to keep traveling.
Can't understand others who don't travel.
Confused by others who don't travel.
Others don't appreciate where they live.
Can't understand ppl who don't travel.
Wanderlust
Passionate about travel.
Comfortable around others who are nomadic or have travelled.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Need to travel
Not living in one place.
Lack of commitment to living in the UK.
Not settling down.
Keep on traveling.
Coping with the loss by moving.
Restlessness. Not enough time to do it all. Fear of settling down. Fear of standing still.
Frequent moves.
Emphasis on travel rather than friendship.
Expending effort to move.
Desire for stability
Wanting stability
Asserting self to achieve stability

Type of people in Friendship group
Quirkiness. Quirkiness Quirkiness Uniqueness of friends. Attracted to quirky/passionate people.
Friends as highly skilled people.
Friends with similar character traits.
Shared values about the world are essential feature of friendship.
Important people have valuable opinion.
Values intelligence
Sharing past experiences creates a bond with others.
Friendships are easier with other people who have travelled.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Type of people in Friendship group
Making an effort with quirky people.
Shared experiences bring people together.
Friends have the same outlook on life.
Friends are easier to make if you are open minded.
Importance of having fun.
FRIENDSHIP with other TCKs is easy
Comfortable with other nomads.
Friendships in groups
Needs a number of people in friendship group.
Safety in groups of people.
Preferring large groups of Friends rather than small amounts.
Safety in numbers.
Creating a small group with others.
Breaking into established networks.

Function of Friendship
Friends as disposable/ Friendships are disposable.
Two types of friendship.
Support brings people together.
Creating friendships through support.
Support is an important function of friendship.
Making an effort to remain connected to friends who are supportive.
Supportive function of friendship.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Function of Friendship
Feeling nurtured by supportive friends.
Impact of TCK- is lack of support
No supportive friends before age of 18 year.
Time required to create supportive Friendships.
Lack of supportive FRIENDSHIP from childhood
Friendship provide support in the absence of family.
Lacks supportive friendships
Flexible attitude to the function of Friendship.
Friendship is disposable.
Referencing himself with other TCK to normalise experiences.
Normalising by creating shared exp with others.
No sense of belonging without F or family.
Home is where friends are
Belonging in terms of people, not places.
Normalising his losses.

Maintaining friendships
Barriers to communication
Technology keeps friendships open.
Seeing people again.
Not ending relationships.
Two types of friendship with different functions.
Desire to keep in touch with people
Facebook gets you back in touch with lost friends.
Maintaining friendships.
Choosing not to keep in touch with friends.
Useful to keep contacts.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Maintaining friendships
Moving around prohibit him from making friends. Harder when people leave him than it is for them to leave him.
I leave vs they leave.
Letting go other people.
Re-establishing connections.
Facebook
Facebook not very useful
Technology to maintain FRIENDSHIP

Function of time.
Time is necessary for making friends.
Home is a result of friendships, which take time to form.
It takes time to establish friendships.
Time required to form lasting memories.
TCKs don't spend time with family.
Keen awareness of time.
Time is crucial in making friends.
Timeframe.
Friendships are brief.
Spending a lot of time with the same people.
Short duration of friendship in childhood.
Time as standing still.
Being stuck in the past.
Not moving on.

Forming friendships.
Friendships need to happen quickly.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Forming friendships.
Pride with conversing with others.
Eager to help others.
Desire is necessary for getting to know people.
Shared activity Shared activity.
Easy to establish friends if there is a pre-existing group.
Using pre-existing social networks.
Tapping other peoples networks of friends.
Using family to make friends.
Breaking into established networks of friends.
Shared experiences make disclosure about self easier.
Shared experiences.
Forcing friendships to avoid loneliness.
Forcing FRIENDSHIP
Lack of consciousness in FRIENDSHIP choices during childhood.
Lack of consciousness in FRIENDSHIP choices during childhood. Lack of consciousness in friendship choices Lack of control over FRIENDSHIP Not being in control of friendships.
Confusion about friendship formation.
Lack of consciousness in making friends
Uncertainty about what a real friend is.
Lack of knowledge about what FRIENDSHIP is.
Intensity of friendships.
Easy to make FRIENDS quickly.
Quick to make friends.
Friendship with other army kids is intense
Friendship is intense.
Friendships happen quickly in the Army.



## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Attitude towards Others
Finds others weird.
Finds other people weird.
Attitude to friendship changed.
Friendships are different when older.
The requirement for friendship changes when older.
Friendship as a repetitive cycle of change
Endless cycle of Making and losing Friendship in childhood.
Friends change constantly.
Friendships evolve.
Repeating childhood experiences.
Repeating childhood patterns of relating to others.

Forming friendships.
Friendships need to happen quickly.
Friendships are brief.
Forcing friendships.
Pressure to make friends.
Making friends quickly is easy.
Forming quick attachments.
Initial contacts.
Closeness doesn't mean proximity.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Changing self to form friends
Pretending to be someone else to make FRIENDS
Influencing others.
Making an impact.
Pretending to be someone you are not.
Performing for others
Entertaining others
Faking it to fit in.
Easy to make friends if you're something else.
Forcing friendship
Being the entertainer.
Faking it to make friends
Learning to adapt him self.
Maintaining friendships requires adaptation.
Behaving in ways that don't' fit with the adult self.
Changing himself to fit in.
Creating a persona.
Being adaptable to fit in with others.
Holding back a part of himself in FRIENDSHIP to be understood.

Expectations of others
High expectations of others.
Expecting reciprocity
Takes effort to be mobile- others much also make an effort.

**Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

<b>Expectations of others</b>
Expects others to be like him
Lack of tolerance for others
Mutual effort between friends is important.
Rejecting others (who don't act the same).
Rejecting people who don't make an effort.

<b>Superficial friendships</b>
Superficial FRIENDSHIP via Facebook.
Superficial relationships.
Superficial attachments.
Superficial relationships in adulthood.
Superficial friendships.
Friends as superficial/acquaintances.
Superficial friendships are useful but not as important as stronger friendships.
Superficial friendships.
Superficial versus important friendships.
Friendship isn't a serious commitment
Lack of Intimacy.
Glib attitude to separation.
Lack of 1-2-1 closeness with others.
Glib attitude to friendship
FRIENDSHIP as disposable/impermanent.
Blasé attitude to friendship

**Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

<b>Superficial friendships</b>
Blasé attitude to friendship.
Lack of commitment to FRIENDSHIP
Lack of depth in friendship.
Lack of effort in forming friendships
TCKs don't have long standing friendships.

<b>Parental/job influences</b>
Modelling Parents job with friends.
Army kids do as Army parents do.
Parental influences on Childhood exp.
Parents job influences the friendship.
Modelling parents.
Influence of parents on loss.
Father's influence.
Function of Army on choices.
Parental influences on friendship.
<b>Responsibility to others</b>
Responsibility for others.
Feeling responsible.
FRIENDSHIP has consequences for the family

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Parental/job influences
Attachment to others
Separateness from others
Keeping a distance from others.
Distancing from closeness.
Low attachment to others.
Reluctance to make friends.
Lack of commitment to Friendships.

Coping with loss of F.
Distancing self from loss.
Passivity in reconnecting
Distancing from pain of losses.
Distancing from friends to survive the loss.
Humour to cope with loss.
Humour as a coping strategy.
Holding back in FRIENDSHIP
Emotional distancing
Emotional distancing from pain of losses.
Emotional distancing from loss.
Expecting/anticipating loss.
Acceptance of loss.
Lack of consciousness about the effect of multiple separations.
Inevitability of loss.
Loss of childhood FRIENDSHIP

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Coping with loss of F.
Loss is sad but inevitable.
Normalising his losses.

Attachment to friends.
Distancing self from friendships.
Emotional disengaging/distancing from friends

After a break where I worked on another section of my thesis I came back to this analysis and got really engrossed in using the variety of the methods described in the Smith book to identify connections across emergent themes. I don't think all of them were useful, or even necessary, but I wanted to gain some familiarity with the methods before moving onto my next case.

**Abstraction:** I used the tables above to put 'like with like' (Smith et al, 2001, p. 96) and develop the table below which appeared as superordinate themes.

Emergent themes.	Emergent themes.
Superficial F.	Forming F.
Parental job/influences	Function of F.
Coping with loss of F.	Social identity
Attitude towards others	Disappointment with F.
Forming F. Quickly	Intensity of F
Changing self to form F	Time as standing still
Expectations of others	Maintaining F
Friendship as a repetitive cycle of change	Function of Time
Being a TCK	Forgetting F.
Self with others	Empathy
Sense of self	Attachment to F.
Psychological effects of F.	

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Emergent themes.	Emergent themes.
Friendship in groups	
Type of F.	
Need to travel	

There is just such a vast amount of information and so many ways of interpreting/describing this information I don't see that I can get anywhere near a useful description of John's world view!! I think using a variety of the other methods described in the Smith book may help with this and give me greater clarity and insight or just overwhelm me even more!

**Subsumption:** I can immediately see where using one of these superordinate themes might help to bring together other related themes. The issue of self stands out straight away! I can't see much else, unless I go back to the original transcripts and then these themes become more informed by my original themes than my emergent themes. I wonder if that is the point?

Changing self	Function of time	Forming F.	Sense of self
Self with others	Time as standing still	Superficial F.	Being TCK.
expectations of others	Friendship as a repetitive cycle of change.	Forming fiends quickly.	
Changing self to form F.		Intensity of F.	
Social identity			

As I am going through this process I notice that I could actually separate many of the emergent themes identified earlier into finer emergent themes, thus creating MORE not less themes which could THEN be grouped into superordinate themes and bring other themes together. The process could be endless! Instead of getting stuck here, I've decided to move onto another method and see what stands out.

If I look more deeply at the theme of time- I wonder about the developmental aspect of Friendship. If the text is examine contextually this seems to be more helpful in exploring this theme (see below)

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

**Polarisation:** I can't see contradictions within the emergent themes but I do if I go back to the original themes. At this level there are many more contradictions. For example, when John talks about being a TCK he describes both negative and positive aspects, this can be seen in the theme identified from the text as 'confusion'. Perhaps in an effort to group things together I have been too broad handed and not acknowledged as many subtleties as there really are. Thinking about this, I have decided to go through the original themes again and report another table this time with polarised themes.

Emergent theme.	Opposing emergent theme
Independence	Responsibility to others.
Lacking supportive friendships	Creating supportive friendships.
Rejecting childhood friends	Nostalgia for childhood friendships.
Forcing friendships	Lack of interest in friendships.
Self confidence	Rejecting self.
Search for base	Travel bug.
Forgetting	Rejecting past???
Open-mindedness	Lack of tolerance for others.

Some of this reminds me of the concept of liminality. Living between a gap! This has only been articulated for identity issues for TCKs, but it may be wider than that, and the experience of friendships causes TCKs to live between many states of

### **Contextualization:**

- 1) Looking for the context of some of these themes has highlighted the developmental aspect of Friendship!! John talks about changes in his friendship experiences between



## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

childhood, adolescence and adulthood. I have found a theme of rejecting the past, which functions to distance from the losses, but it could be developmental.

2)

**Numeration:** Immediately the following themes stand out often.

Frequent Emergent theme.	Infrequent emergent theme.
Superficial friendship x8	
Emotional distancing from loss x5	
Inability to settle down x4 /travel bug x3 and numerous other ways of describing it.	
Quirkiness x 5	
Army references x 12	Responsibility to others x3
changing self with friends x 10.	
Lacking supportive friendships. x 5	Friendship as supportive (family) x2
Sadness/loss	
Anxiety	

If you contrast the reference to the Army and feeling responsible for others they seem related.

I'm really struck by the reference to friends as family. I wonder if this is because I myself and feeling disconnected from my family at this point in my life and am trying to form stronger connections with friends as a replacement?

**Function:**

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Examining the emergent themes for their function in the text I noticed a few things to illuminate the experiential process John engages in.

- 1) When John *normalises his losses* he is usually doing so by comparing himself to other TCKs, or 'unique/quirky' individuals. He also often uses the term 'you know' I thought about this a great deal as I read and re-read the transcript in there early stages and wrote a post it note to myself to discuss with a colleague, then forgot about it until now. Perhaps by using 'you know' John is using me as a reference point for his own experiences. As an ATCK myself, I can empathise with his experiences, so 'you know' serves as a function for his ability to normalise his experiences and convey them to me, thus creating a shared past or history without actually describing it???? *This relates well to the existing literature that TCKs experience a sense of belonging only with other TCKs.* I think it also emphasises the sense that TCKs feel different from others.
- 2) Frequent uses of 'i don't remember' theme of *forgetting*. When I review in the the it seems these lapses in memory serve to avoid thinking about loss at a deeper level. John seems to forget things often and thus avoid the painful truth that his friendship experiences are quite limited.
- 3) John often makes jokes or laughs when he is describing a difficult memory or experience. This doesn't happen often, but it does seem to effect me and I collude with him throughout. It serves to stop me asking deeper questions of him about his experiences. It keeps things light, and prevents greater reflection of loss.
- 4) He is certainly the entertainer. I think perhaps this is one of the reasons I have chosen this transcript to use as my example. The function of his jokey/chatty/entertaining self is to get me on board, to empathise with him and to want to know more about him. He seems like he'd be really good company and a fun person to spent time with. I'd want to be his friend!! Faking it in this way would make people gravitate towards him, so he would avoid loneliness, but at what cost to himself? If his friendships are earned by entertaining others what happens when he is no longer entertaining? OR when he feels he is/can not be entertaining?

### ***Bringing it together.***

I have no idea if I'm doing any of this well or even 'well enough'. I think one could spend forever analysing this data and what appears above is only what I have written down. I find myself thinking of themes when I'm running, eating dinner, and every moment in between, so much of the work doesn't happen conveniently when I'm in front of a computer and I have taken to jotting things down in a note pad.

What appears above is my attempt to journal the more formal aspects of the analysis, so that readers can have some insight into what I attempted to achieve with the data. Below is what I have come up with in terms of super and sub-ordinate themes.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Themes and sub-themes	page/line	Key words
The psychological effect of Friendship * sadness * loss * anxiety  * loneliness	p24. 1.527 p8 1.190  p27. L. 591	die it feels like they're not gonna want to be around you.
Self with others * Entertainer/faking it * Army kid. * being a TCK makes you different	p7.1, 160 p13. L. 290 p8 L.179	entertainer Forces I think its kind of unique
Low attachment to others * Superficial friendships. * Emotional distancing * Humor to cope with loss.	p.1, L.17-18 p6 1-129 p.2.L.23	acquaintances not bothered
The Usefulness of F. * Sportiveness * * safety in numbers	p.17. 1.385-396 p11.1.239	stick together, supporting Together

There is so much i could talk about and having to reduce like this seems so unfair (but completely necessary)

Going through all of this I am already thinking of other transcripts. I think it will be very difficult to 'bracket' what I have discovered here and let new themes emerge. However, I am aware that my experiences with each participant were very different each time and my questions changed with each person, so I am sure there will be other themes.

I am really concerned that i'm not looking deep enough at the text. Smith mentions that this can be a problem especially, for first time researchers. Hopefully discussing with others will force me to look more closely.

I feel like I need to move onto the next case, or else I will get stuck here forever. I think I could look at the various ways of extracting themes and get stuck in circles, so I'm moving on.

Doing all of this on the computer is quite time consuming, not to mention painful. I am glad that I have kept a full record of the process and I intend to keep a diary of all future examinations of the data, however I will do future working out in my own handwriting, and keep a reflective journal alongside.

### **STEP 5: Moving to the next case:**

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

My notes for each case can be read on the CD included in this document.

Overall this was a time consuming process, and difficult to bracket what I found with this first case. However, I feel the discipline has made me look more closely at the idiographic. It has also made me look again at what I found with John. There is not much I would change, but there is more I recognise when I begin to look across cases...

Overall I found themes of:

Faking it to fit in.

Independence.

Distancing from others to avoid pain of possible loss to the friendship.

### **STEP 6: Looking for patterns across cases.**

I have just written out all the emergent themes from each transcript and begun repeating the processes above. Fascinating! I'm so very excited at this point, because I can actually see where this may be going. Immediately the theme of psychological effects of friendship leaped out!! All participants shared this theme. I'm a little anxious that it appeared so easily and may be overly simplistic, but it is VERY much there and I thin it may be a case of interpreting what effects are the most visible across the group.

Themes of travel, independence were also there and immediately stood out. Unfortunately, so was the issue of Englishness, which I had really only noticed when I analysed DaT's transcript. However, this can be polarised with AR's use of Englishness as positive and NW's view of Englishness as useful in the overseas context.

The process of looking between cases has made me go back to the original themes and re-examine them in the context of what emerged in other cases. The table below is what I have concluded with, which I suspect is the beginning.

Themes	sub-themes	Participant & Key words
The psychological effects of friendship	* Sadness/loss re: friendship/support * loss of memories. * Fear/anxiety re: loneliness * low self esteem (rejection)	all/Various
Conflict about the past/being a Internationally mobile	* TCK conflict * Rejecting friendship * Emotional distancing from F/Humour to avoid pain of memory	All/Various All/various All various
View of self	* Faking it to fit in (rebellion) * Being different (independent) * Englishness or non-Englishness!!	all except 5 all except 4 & 8??

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Themes	sub-themes	Participant & Key words
variability for the function of friendship	* Friends as family/support * Safety of the group (reference group)	all except 3 all
Influences over friendship choices	* Lack of choice * Modelling parents. * Open-mindedness/travel.	all/Various 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 all.

I can see how themes are not discrete entities but interrelated, as some of these themes are really hard to separate. Conflict about past for e.g. relates closely to loss of support.

Revision of the above table through the process of writing my Findings section has caused me to reject forgetting as a theme and re-arrange other themes. I am not working with the table below, but this may also change as the writing continues. It feels never ending and nebulous at this stage and I'm constantly re-arranging sub themes within the super themes, as they are all so related!

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme
The psychological impact of friendship	* Loss * Anxiety/loneliness
Emotional distancing from friends.	* Dismissing previous friendships * Using Humour to minimise pain
Self concept in response to friendship.	* Faking it to fit in * Being independent * Open-mindedness
Diverse function of friendship.	* Friends as family * Friendship as useful/protection * Confirmation of self
The difficulties inherent with forming friendships	* Lack of understanding * Lack of control * Englishness

I don't think that emotional distancing from friends stands as a Superordinate theme as humour could be used also to dismiss from friendships and normalise pain. I think it fits better with psychological impact as it seems very much an aspect of attachment to others. However if these sub themes combine there are more appropriately labeled the impact of being TCK on friendship. It might then be useful to bring back forgetting!!

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme
The impact of being international mobile on Friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Loss</li> <li>* Anxiety/loneliness</li> <li>Dismissing previous friendships/Using Humour to minimise pain (low attachment to others)</li> </ul>
Emotional distancing from friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Dismissing previous friendships</li> <li>* Using Humour to minimise pain</li> </ul>
Self concept in response to friendship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Faking it to fit in</li> <li>* Being independent</li> <li>* Open-mindedness</li> </ul>
Diverse function of friendship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Friends as family</li> <li>* Friendship as useful/protection</li> <li>* Confirmation of self</li> </ul>
The difficulties inherent with forming friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of understanding</li> <li>* Lack of control</li> <li>* Englishness</li> </ul>

It's really interesting that the process of writing themes down requires constant re-writing and re-structuring. I don't think Emotional distancing is a separate theme as it seems connected with the psych of friendships. Also it seems it is less a function of the psychological, which would help ground the theme, but more the impact of being a TCK.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme
The impact of being international mobile on Friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Loss</li> <li>* Anxiety/loneliness</li> <li>Dismissing previous friendships/Using Humour to minimise pain (low attachment to others)</li> </ul>
Self concept in response to friendship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Faking it to fit in</li> <li>* Being independent</li> <li>* Open-mindedness</li> </ul>
Diverse function of friendship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Friends as family</li> <li>* Friendship as useful/protection</li> <li>* Confirmation of self</li> </ul>
The difficulties inherent with forming friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of understanding</li> <li>* Lack of control</li> <li>* Englishness</li> </ul>

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Lack on control, is more linked to the effects of being TCK, and a bit surface meaning so I'm reconsidering it- I may develop it in line with autonomy, which would include the responsibility to others as well as lack of control over environment, which forces friendships to occur.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Participant
The impact of being a TCK on friendship	* Loss * Anxiety/loneliness * Dismissing friendships	*
The function of friendship.	* Friends as family * Confirmation of self identity * Acceptance of personhood	*
Self concept in response to friendship.	* Faking it to fit in * Being independent	*
The difficulties of forming friendships in the UK	* Lack of understanding * Englishness	*

I'm second guessing and third guessing myself. There seem to be an enormous amount of ways I could organise the data. I've been thinking of 'dismissing friendship' this week and how it sounds a lot like rejection and this can also be seen in rejection of self and FROM others!!

I have met with my IPA group and the process of talking about my themes has made me re-evaluate some of them. I have joined several themes together and re-named others. I also realised I had them in the wrong order, so I have re-organised the way in which they appear, thus putting more importance on the issues of identity. What I have now got appears below and following a final meeting with my Supervisor this is what I will be writing up.

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Original text themes
The challenges of friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of understanding</li> </ul>	Flexibility/diversity/thinking outside the box/bullying/feeling judged/confusion/lack of knowledge (fashion/Pop culture)/peoples expectations/lack of acknowledgement re:difficulties/feeling rejected/being rejected/lack of empathy/difficulty explaining self/difficulty relating to others/wrong assumptions about me/Bullied
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Englishness</li> </ul>	Britishness/Englishness/natives/UK people/non-english/Overseas friends/foreigners/comparisons with former cultures/negative view of English/western identity/Assumptions about Englishness/English 'look'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of autonomy</li> </ul>	Parents influence/modeling parents/Forces mentality/Dads job/coming and going/responsibility to others/no choice/boundaries/Fathers or parents advice/lack of opportunities/repeating childhood patterns/forcing friendships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping in touch</li> </ul>	Facebook/fax/letters/email/face-to-face/visiting/catching up/telephone/working hard to keep in touch/shared activities/conversations/learning from others/needing time together/re-establishing connections/desire to stay in touch/
Multiple selves (from an awareness that 'I am different')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faking it to fit in</li> </ul>	pretending/entertaining/forcing friendships/escapism/trying to be positive/changing self/'breaking' into groups/adapting self/changing self/cultural chameleon/restriction/un-natural childhood/letting down my guard.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being independent</li> </ul>	being different/traveling/unique/realness/travel bug/self-sufficiency/rejecting first impressions/respecting others who are different/rejecting rules/rebellion/asserting self/rejecting social norms/not afraid to be myself/self-determination/breaking from the crowd/out of place/I'm different/feeling like an outsider/not belonging/noticing differences/



## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Original text themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group self.</li> </ul>	similar to me/also have travelled/Forces kids can spot each other/recognizing other TCKs/sharing a history/normalizing with other TCKs/'you know'/relating to TCKs/shared past/
Levels of friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superficial friendships</li> </ul>	Emotional distancing/rejecting/distancing/repressing/becoming engrossed in activity/distraction/blaming others/resentment/forgetting/fear of commitment/judging others/'Quick' friendships/acquaintances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends as family</li> </ul>	friends as family/family as friends/core group/friends from childhood/long term friends/Home/recreating family/boarding school family/
The psychological impact of being a TCK on friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss</li> </ul>	loss/sadness/multiple losses/forgetting/avoiding/recovering from loss/envy of others/resigned to loss/pain/regret/moving/temporariness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety</li> </ul>	anxiety/frustration/desperation/working hard/being self conscious/worry/rumination/isolation/fear/avoiding friendships/guilt/stress/culture shock/painful re-entering/feeling overwhelmed/uncertainty/shame/insecurity/expecting rejection/hiding from others/
Valued characteristic of friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness.</li> </ul>	open-mindedness/friends with foreigners/friends with other TCKs/diversity/being an 'other'/feistiness/quirkiness/being myself/mutual understanding/being the same as friends/empathizing with me/talking about my past/curious about me/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportiveness</li> </ul>	supportiveness/support network/safety in the group/

## Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

In writing up the themes above I realise that keeping in touch is not a problem of forming friendship, but maintaining them, and so I think this goes more with loss.

Also I think that superficial relationships might be low attachment which would fit better with Psych effects of friendships, whereas friends as family fits better with valued characteristics because what they are talking about is supportiveness, as much as family.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Original text themes
The difficulties of forming & maintaining friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding</li> </ul>	Flexibility/diversity/thinking outside the box/bullying/feeling judged/confusion/lack of knowledge (fashion/Pop culture)/peoples expectations/lack of acknowledgement re:difficulties/feeling rejected/being rejected/lack of empathy/difficulty explaining self/difficulty relating to others/wrong assumptions about me/Bullied
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Englishness</li> </ul>	Britishness/Englishness/natives/UK people/non-english/Overseas friends/foreigners/comparisons with former cultures/negative view of English/western identity/Assumptions about Englishness/English 'look'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient autonomy.</li> </ul>	Parents influence/modeling parents/Forces mentality/Dads job/coming and going/responsibility to others/no choice/boundaries/Fathers or parents advice/lack of opportunities/repeating childhood patterns/forcing friendships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping in touch</li> </ul>	Faxing/Facebook/loosing touch/desperate to get hold of him/wanted to see her/visited at uni/went back to Oz/Came back to UK together/lived together/Facebook/Twitter/Computer/writing letters/phone calls/SKYPE/Christmas cards/
Multiple selves (from an awareness that 'I am different')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faking it to fit in</li> </ul>	pretending/entertaining/forcing friendships/escapism/trying to be positive/changing self/'breaking' into groups/adapting self/changing self/cultural chameleon/restriction/un-natural childhood/letting down my guard.

# Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Original text themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being independent</li> </ul>	being different/traveling/unique/realness/travel bug/self-sufficiency/rejecting first impressions/respecting others who are different/rejecting rules/rebellion/asserting self/rejecting social norms/not afraid to be myself/self-determination/breaking from the crowd/out of place/I'm different/feeling like an outsider/not belonging/noticing differences/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A shared identity</li> </ul>	similar to me/also have travelled/Forces kids can spot each other/recognizing other TCKs/sharing a history/normalizing with other TCKs/'you know'/relating to TCKs/shared past/
The psychological impact of being a TCK on friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss</li> </ul>	loss/sadness/multiple losses/forgetting/avoiding/recovering from loss/envy of others/resigned to loss/pain/regret/moving/temporariness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety</li> </ul>	anxiety/frustration/desperation/working hard/being self conscious/worry/rumination/isolation/fear/avoiding friendships/guilt/stress/culture shock/painful re-entering/feeling overwhelmed/uncertainty
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low levels of attachment</li> </ul>	Emotional distancing/rejecting/distancing/repressing/becoming engrossed in activity/rejecting others/distraction/blaming others/resentment/forgetting/fear of commitment/judging others/'Quick' friendships/acquaintances/superficial relationships
Valued characteristics of friendship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness.</li> </ul>	open-mindedness/friends with foreigners/friends with other TCKs/diversity/being an 'other'/feistiness/quirkiness/being myself/mutual understanding/being the same as friends/empathizing with me/talking about my past/curious about me/

**Appendix 16- Reflective Journal for development of themes.**

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Original text themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportiveness</li> </ul>	supportiveness/support network/safety in the group/friends as family/family as friends/core group/friends from childhood/long term friends/Home/recreating family/boarding school family/

**You know you're a TCK (Third Culture Kid) when:**

- 1) You struggle to answer the question “where are you from?”
- 2) You speak two (or more) languages but can't spell in them.
- 3) You are asked, “Where are you from?” has more than one reasonable answer
- 4) You feel odd being in the ethnic majority
- 5) You look like everyone else around you but still don't fit in
- 6) You have the urge to move to a new place every couple of years
- 7) You go into culture shock upon returning to your “home” country
- 8) You have a passport, but no driver's license
- 9) You don't know where home is (besides saying, ‘planet earth’, which is usually not accepted)
- 10) Your life story uses the phrase “Then we moved to...” three (or four, or five...) times.
- 11) You think VISA is a document that's stamped in your passport, not a plastic card you carry in your wallet.
- 12) You sort your friends by continent not colour or religion.
- 13) You believe vehemently that football is played with a round, spotted ball.
- 14) You feel that multiple passports would be appropriate.
- 15) Half of your phone calls are unintelligible to those around you.
- 16) You know the geography of the rest of the world, but you don't know the geography of your ‘own’ country.
- 17) You've gotten out of school because of monsoons, bomb threats, and/or popular demonstrations.
- 18) You often speak of your ‘home’ country in the third person as if it were not yours.
- 19) You constantly get labelled being from another country than ‘yours’. (Usually one you lived in at one point.)
- 20) You have friends from more than 30 different countries.
- 21) You realize it really is a small world, after all.

Milosh Zorica (2012) You know you're a TCK (Third Culture Kid) when: Retrieved June, 21, 2012 from <http://www.nunomad.com/blog/you-know-youre-a-third-culture-kid-when/>